

**6 DECEMBER 2021**

**NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the New Forest District Council held on Monday, 6 December 2021

\* Cllr Derek Tipp (Chairman)

\* Cllr Alan O'Sullivan (Vice-Chairman)

**Councillors:**

- \* Alan Alvey
- \* Diane Andrews
- \* Ann Bellows
- \* Sue Bennison  
Geoffrey Blunden
- \* Hilary Brand
- \* Alex Brunsdon  
Fran Carpenter
- \* Louise Cerasoli  
Mark Clark
- \* Steve Clarke
- \* Jill Cleary
- \* Anne Corbridge
- \* Keith Craze
- \* Kate Crisell  
Jack Davies
- \* Steve Davies
- \* Arthur Davis
- \* Sandra Delemare
- \* Philip Dowd  
Jan Duke
- \* Barry Dunning  
Jacqui England  
Allan Glass  
Andrew Gossage
- \* Michael Harris
- \* David Harrison
- \* David Hawkins

**Councillors:**

- \* Edward Heron
- \* Jeremy Heron
- \* Alison Hoare
- \* Maureen Holding  
Christine Hopkins
- \* Mahmoud Kangarani
- \* Joshua Kidd
- \* Emma Lane
- \* Martyn Levitt
- \* Alexis McEvoy
- \* Ian Murray  
Stephanie Osborne
- \* Neville Penman
- \* Caroline Rackham  
Alvin Reid
- \* Joe Reilly
- \* Barry Rickman
- \* Tony Ring
- \* Steve Rippon-Swaine
- \* David Russell
- \* Ann Sevier
- \* Michael Thierry
- \* Beverley Thorne
- \* Neil Tungate
- \* Alex Wade
- \* Malcolm Wade
- \* Christine Ward
- \* John Ward

\*Present

**Officers Attending:**

Kate Ryan, Colin Read, Grainne O'Rourke and Matt Wisdom.

**Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Blunden, Carpenter, Clark, J Davies, Duke, England, Glass, Gossage, Hopkins, Osborne and Reid.

**51 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2021, be confirmed.

**52 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of any disclosable pecuniary interests by Members.

**53 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Les Puttock**

The Chairman referred with great sadness to the recent passing of former councillor and Chairman, Les Puttock. Les represented the Ashurst, Copythorne South and Netley Marsh Ward from 2003 until he stood down in May 2019.

Les sat on many committees during his time with NFDC, including the Appeals Committee for the whole time he was a councillor, as well as serving on the General Purposes and Licensing Committee which he also chaired, the Leisure Review Panel and Planning Development Control Committee.

He represented the Council on various Outside Bodies, with a particular interest in road safety, serving on the New Forest Road Safety Council from 2007 to 2011, when it then became the Road Safety Council, which Les continued to serve on until he stood down in 2019.

Most notably, Les was the Council's Vice Chairman for the year 2008/09 and the Chairman of the Council for 2009/10.

The Chairman, on behalf of the Council, expressed his sincere condolences to Les' family and friends, and placed on record the Council's thanks for the eminent service Les had given to the District.

Other Members of the Council paid tribute to Les.

**Engagements**

The Chairman reported on the following recent engagements:-

14 November 2021

Represented the District at the Remembrance Sunday commemorations, along with the Deputy Lieutenant and the Leader of the Council at the service, parade and wreath laying in Lyndhurst.

15 November 2021

Attended the AGM for New Forest Mencap, as Honorary President.

16 November 2021

Attended the laying up of the old colours for the 1st Battalion of The Princess of Wales Regiment, held at Winchester Cathedral.

19 November 2021

Attended the Beaulieu Estate Dinner, at the invitation of Lord and Lady Montagu.

2 December 2021

Attended the New Forest Brilliance in Business Awards, at Brockenhurst College.

28 November 2021

The Vice-Chairman attended the Annual Civic Service at the Priory Church of St Mary the Virgin, Havant, hosted by the Mayor and Consort of Havant.

### **Kate Ryan**

The Chairman, along with Council Members, formally welcomed the Council's new Chief Executive, Kate Ryan, to her first Full Council meeting.

## **54 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **Solent Freeport**

The Leader was pleased to report that the Freeport Board had submitted its outline business case plus on Friday 26 November 2021. The business case was now being evaluated by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and HM Treasury. The Council was hopeful that notification of approval would take place during the first week of January. Once approval had been given, the full business case would need to be developed and the Council would have a key role to play in its preparation and approval for submission in March 2022.

### **Arts Council England**

Members welcomed the news that, working with partners Energise Me, Folio, The Handy Trust and the National Park, the District had been awarded between £750k and £1m over the next 3 years from Arts Council England's Creative People and Places fund for the Culture in Common initiative. This would help to develop a thriving community driven arts scene that connected and celebrated the disparate communities of the New Forest District. The programme would learn from, inspire and enable communities to enjoy, commission and create their own artistic opportunities. Culture in Common's vision is to spark cultural engagement across the District through a sustainable and inclusive cultural offer led by the people who live there.

In addition, the Leader was pleased to announce that an agreement in principal from Arts Council England had been reached to joint fund an officer on a fixed term project, as a result of being identified as a Priority Place. This role would help the Council to identify opportunities to build on the great work that the Arts and Cultural communities were delivering across district.

**Colin Read**

The Leader referred to Colin Read, the Interim Chief Executive, who was attending his final Council meeting.

Members of the Council paid tribute to Colin for the way he had skilfully guided the Council through the last few months ahead of the start date of the new Chief Executive.

In recognition of Colin's service to the Council over many years, the Leader of the Council and Leader of the Opposition confirmed that Colin's name would be added to the board in the main stairway of Appletree Court, alongside previous Chief Executives.

**55 REPORTS OF THE CABINET**

The Leader of the Council first presented the report of the Cabinet meeting held on 3 November 2021 and moved that it be received. Cllr Cleary seconded the motion.

**Paragraph 4 – Appointments to Outside Body – New Forest National Park Authority**

Members of the Council acknowledged and wished to record their thanks for the significant work and contribution of Cllr Rickman on the National Park of Authority over a number of years. It was noted that Cllr Rickman had been a key member of the Planning Committee and an active Member supportive of the partnership plan.

The Leader of the Council then presented the report of the Cabinet meeting held on 1 December 2021 and moved the adoption of the recommendations. Cllr Cleary seconded the motion.

**Paragraph 1 – Medium Term Financial Plan**

In response to a question on the cost of parking clocks, the Leader of the Council confirmed that fees and charges would continue to be set in the normal way, although it was anticipated that the change in the clock prices for 2022 should be sufficient to cover the increased costs of operating the new virtual scheme.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be received and the recommendations be adopted.

**56 REPORT OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE**

Cllr O'Sullivan presented the report of the Audit Committee meeting held on 29 October 2021 and moved the adoption of the recommendations. Cllr Lane seconded the motion.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be received and the recommendations be adopted.

**57 REPORT OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE**

Cllr Clarke presented the report of the General Purposes and Licensing Committee meeting held on 22 November 2021 and moved the adoption of the recommendations. Cllr Tungate seconded the motion.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be received and the recommendations be adopted.

**58 REPORT OF THE HR COMMITTEE**

The Leader of the Council presented the report of the HR Committee meeting held on 23 November 2021. Cllr Harris seconded the motion.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be received and the recommendations be adopted.

**59 QUESTIONS**

There were none.

**60 QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDERS UNDER STANDING ORDER 22A**

Questions were put and answered under Standing Order 22A as follows:-

- Cllr Rackham to the Portfolio Holder for Partnering and Wellbeing, Cllr Blunden on crime figures.
- Cllr A Wade to the Portfolio Holder for Business, Tourism and High Streets, Cllr Harris, on support to businesses.
- Cllr Craze to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Regeneration and Infrastructure, Cllr Andrews, on the introduction of a PSPO on the open Forest.
- Cllr Hawkins to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Coastal Services, Cllr S Davies, on Milford on Sea works.
- Cllr Tungate to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Coastal Services, Cllr S Davies, on Hurst Castle restoration.
- Cllr Lane to the Leader of the Council, Cllr E Heron, on progress with support to the campaign for the introduction of an Average Speed Camera system on the B3078 Roger Penny Way.

Note – a copy of the full questions and replies are attached to these minutes.

**61 REVIEW AND ALLOCATION OF SEATS TO COMMITTEES AND PANELS**

The Leader of the Council moved the adoption of the recommendations contained within the report, which included a reduction in the size of the Council's Planning Committee from 20 to 16, a change in the quorum rules for the Cabinet, Committees and Panels, and the necessary appointments to Committees and Panels in accordance with the principles as set out in Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. Cllr Cleary seconded the motion.

The Council, having received both the wishes of the political groups and the preferences of the non-aligned Members, considered the option to allocate seats to the non-aligned Members as nearly as possible in proportion to the number of those Members on the Council.

The Chairman confirmed that he would take any debate and a vote on recommendation 1.1 first, that the number of seats on the Planning Committee be reduced from 20 to 16. Some Members spoke against the proposal and highlighted that the wide representation across the District that 20 councillors provided was an important factor, alongside the responsibility of councillors to manage their attendance. Those speaking in support of the recommendations cited the Local Government Association Planning Advisory Service (PAS) recommendations, and that a third of the Council sitting on the Committee was not sustainable, particularly given the National Park Authority's role as the Planning Authority for a significant geographical area in the District. This recommendation was put to a vote and carried.

The Chairman then invited debate on the proposal to change the Council's quorum rules as outlined in paragraph 2.3 of the report. Some Members spoke against the proposal, citing the possibility of some meetings taking place with no more than three Members. It was noted that this was the minimum allowed under the proposed quorum rules for Committees and Panels that had fewer than 12 seats. The principle of a quarter of the membership applied for Committees and Panels with 12 or more seats, consistent with the quorum rules for Council meetings. Some Members speaking in support of the recommendations argued that attendance was a matter for each individual Member to be held accountable for. This recommendation was put to a vote and carried.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the number of seats on the Planning Committee be reduced from 20 to 16;
2. That the Council's Standing Orders relating to quorum be amended as outlined at paragraph 2.3 of the report;
3. That the allocation of seats to committees and panels in accordance with the principles set out in the report, be agreed as at the table at paragraph 4.6 of the report;
4. That the Council gives effect to the wishes of the political groups in making appointments to these Committees and Panels, for the remainder of the four year period ending May 2023;
5. That the effective date of the decisions above be 1 January 2022; and
6. That the Monitoring Officer be authorised to make the consequential changes to the Constitution arising from the above.

CHAIRMAN

## FULL COUNCIL – 6 DECEMBER 2021 – QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDERS UNDER STANDING ORDER 22A

### First Questions

#### Question 1

**From Cllr Caroline Rackham to the Portfolio Holder for Partnering and Wellbeing, Cllr Geoffrey Blunden**

In our area, violence without injury has risen by 419 incidents or 20%, theft from vehicles up by 158 incidents and rape increased by 32 incidents. These are appalling statistics made even worse by the fact that this period covers part of the two major lockdowns.

I wonder if the portfolio holder can explain exactly what is being done to stop local crime figures rising even further than they have over the past year and support our police to do their job properly?

Answer:

*The Prevention and Detection of Crime within the District is primarily the responsibility of the Constabulary and I am pleased that Donna Jones, the Hampshire and the Isle of Wight's Police & Crime Commissioner has pledged an additional 600 uniformed Officers by 2023.*

*Through the Safer New Forest Strategy and Delivery Group, the Council brings together key partner agencies, including the Police, Probation, Adult Services, Hampshire Fire and Rescue and Health services. Members of these organisations recognise the importance of working together in a co-ordinated manner, utilising resources to focus on both prevention, education and post-conviction interventions.*

*To obtain a greater understanding of emerging trends and vulnerabilities, the Council's Community Safety Team compiles an annual strategic assessment of crime and disorder in our area using data provided by our partners, which is published on the Safer New Forest Website. The crime data referred to within the 2020 assessment is captured from the period of April 1st 2019 until March 31st 2020 and therefore covers only 5 days of the first lockdown.*

*The 2020 assessment formulated the annual priorities which are published within the Partnership Plan of 2021 and cover 4 high level priorities:*

- *Children at Risk*
- *Drug & Alcohol Related Harm*
- *Domestic Abuse*
- *Prevention of Risk & Exploitation of Vulnerable People*

*The published Partnership Plan outlines the targeted work, activities and progress being undertaken by the Council and our partners in addressing these priorities. Each priority has a designated lead agency from within the strategic partnership who oversees the delivery of the action plan.*

*It is through the combined effort of the Safer New Forest partners that we are able to drive and effect change with responsible bodies and authorities, providing additional resources and support. It is with this combined and shared responsibility that we will continue to endeavour to make the New Forest a safe place to live, work and visit.*

*Notes – in response to a supplementary question on supporting the police with more staff in the Safer Communities team, it was highlighted that the Council provides significant support to crime prevention agencies through CCTV, working with partners to analyse trends and also working with communities to understand their priorities. The Leader of the Council answered this question in the absence of the Portfolio Holder for Partnering and Wellbeing, Cllr Blunden.*

## **Question 2**

### **From Cllr Alex Wade to the Portfolio Holder for Business, Tourism and High Streets, Cllr Michael Harris**

Our own colleagues employed by the council, have worked very differently over the pandemic and of course are considering how best to work moving forward as are businesses right across the New Forest District. Could the portfolio holder please explain what is being done to support businesses in the area to adjust to working practices at this difficult time.

*Answer:*

*The Council has given businesses across the district direct support through the awards of grants through ARG and the New Forest Rural Resilience and Rural SME Grant scheme. The Council has allocated £37.5 million in grants to over 2,500 recipient businesses. We continue to communicate with over 3,600 businesses each week through the business enews. This includes raising awareness of specific initiatives, training and support offered by partner organisations including Solent LEP which will include advice and support on different ways of working for those businesses that are needing support in this area. The benefits of this work have been noted by the LEP and they have reported high levels of up-take of these initiatives from New Forest businesses. Of course, most businesses have direct access to their own advisors, such as accountants, solicitors, bank managers, financial advisors and consultants to name but a few. Returning to my point about the 3,600 businesses who subscribe to our free weekly business enews. This does leave 4,400 businesses in the District who have not yet signed up for this valuable service. I would therefore take this opportunity to encourage them to visit the NFDC website and ensure that they hear about all business news, grants and information in the most effective and timely way. I thank Cllr Wade for providing me with the opportunity to publicise this valuable and yet free of charge service for New Forest businesses.*

## **Question 3**

### **From Cllr Keith Craze to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Regeneration and Infrastructure, Cllr Diane Andrews**

I understand that the Council has received a request from the New Forest Recreation Management Steering Group to consider the introduction of a PSPO to help tackle the feeding of livestock, lighting of fires and BBQ's and out of control dogs on the open Forest, what steps has the Portfolio Holder taken to consider this request?

*Answer:*

*The Council has received a request from the New Forest Recreation Management Steering Group to consider the introduction of a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO). Initial investigations have taken to establish how these Orders are being used elsewhere. There have been a number of discussions with other Councils who are using these powers. Officers are working closely with Forestry England and there are on going discussions to agree if PSPOs are made how they would be monitored and enforced. It is critical that there*



*is a full understand of the resources needed to manage any PSPOs and a full understanding of the measures that need to be in place once a PSPO is served. The PSPO can be enforced by the Police, Council enforcement officers, or any other authorised officers. Without adequate resources to enforce an Order will not achieve the outcome that the RMS has identified.*

*The Council will continue to work closely with Forestry England to progress this work. I have set up a Member Panel so that progress on what is a complex project can be reported back on a regular basis. I am sure Councillor Craze that you and the rest of the Council will be hearing more from me on this matter over the coming months as the work progresses. I am pleased with the progress that has been made to date and confident that through strong partnership working we will reduce the impact the unwanted behaviour is having on the environment of the district.*

*Note – in response to supplementary question on responsible off lead dog walking, it was confirmed that any potential PSPO would only target those who were not in control of their dogs and it would not seek to prevent off lead dog walking.*

#### **Question 4**

**From Cllr David Hawkins to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Coastal Services, Cllr Steve Davies**

There is a significant amount of work being carried out on the Milford On Sea front again. Is this more emergency work and can you please inform me who is paying this bill?

*Answer:*

*The work currently being undertaken at Milford-on-Sea is maintenance of the timber groynes. This is being undertaken as part of the annual planned maintenance programme on our coastal defence assets.*

*It is not emergency works and is being funded through the Council's coastal maintenance budget.*

*A point of interest is that the timbers being used were excess to requirements at BCP who offered them to us free of charge. I like to think of this as an excellent example of collaboration between Christchurch Bay Strategy partners.*

#### **Question 5**

**From Cllr Neil Tungate to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Coastal Services, Cllr Steve Davies**

We are aware the Hurst Castle is undergoing some significant restoration. Can you explain when the work will be completed and will it endure further extreme weather and rising sea levels?

*Answer:*

*The work being carried out to the Castle defences is being led by English Heritage. The Council does not have full oversight of their work programme, but is aware of the next phase of their planned works which will commence in the near future. This will involve importing further shingle and rebuilding of the temporary rock structure around the east wing. I'm not in a position to comment on the long-term viability of the defence works.*

*I will add that the coastal officers were invited to visit the site and viewed the resin injection process being used to stabilise the foundations. I'm no civil engineer, but perhaps this 21st century solution might offer protection at other historic sites?*

*In considering the wider strategic approach to the future management of this area the Council is engaging with English Heritage and others who own land at Hurst Spit to consider options for future management of this area. Any works will be designed taking into account the impact of climate change. Hurst Spit itself is being considered across both coastal strategies currently in progress across our coastal frontage – these are the Christchurch Bay Strategy and the Hurst to Lymington Strategy.*

#### **Question 6**

##### **From Cllr Emma Lane to the Leader of the Council, Cllr Edward Heron**

Following the decision of Council on the 11th October to support the campaign for the introduction of an Average Speed Camera system on the B3078 Roger Penny Way, can the Leader provide an update on what steps have been taken to progress this important issue?

*Answer:*

*Following the October Council meeting I wrote to the Official Verderer, Police & Crime Commissioner and Leader of the County Council requesting a meeting to agree how this may be progressed. This has now been arranged to take place in January and will include representatives of the National Park Authority, Forestry England and Natural England.*

*This meeting will bring together senior representatives of all the statutory organisations required to deliver an Average Speed Camera system, Police, Highways Authority, landowner, planning and regulatory. I am confident that this will be a significant step forward in tackling the high number of animal casualties on this road.*

*I would just take this opportunity to express my thanks to the Police for 'Operation Mountie'. Working with partners, including this Council, last week this operation on the B3078 saw the Camera Van catch 53 drivers exceeding the speed limit, including one caught overtaking at over 50mph. In addition one car was seized for being driven without a valid licence and another driver reported for having no insurance. 10 other drivers were spoken to and educated on the importance of staying under the speed limit within the Forest.*