

22 FEBRUARY 2016

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the New Forest District Council held in the Council Chamber, Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Monday, 22 February 2016

* Cllr Mrs A J Hoare (Chairman)

* Cllr G C Beck (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

* A R Alvey
* Mrs D E Andrews
* W G Andrews
* P J Armstrong
* Mrs S V Beeton
* Ms R Bellows
* 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 T Glass
* L E Harris
* M R Harris
* D Harrison
* J D Heron
* E J Heron
Mrs M D Holding

Councillors:

* Mrs P Jackman
* M J Kendal
* Mrs E L Lane
* Mrs P J Lovelace
* B D Lucas
* 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
* R A Wappet
* J G Ward
* Mrs C V Ward
* M L White
C A Wise
* Mrs P A Wyeth

*Present

Officers Attending:

R Jackson, Miss G O'Rourke, Mrs R Rutins and Ms M Stephens

Apologies:

Cllrs Dow, Mrs Holding, Penson, Mrs Rostand and Wise.

52 MINUTES**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2015 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

53 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs Armstrong, Binns, Poole and Wade in Minute No. 57, item 2 of the Report of General Purposes & Licensing Committee dated 29 January 2016.

Cllr Ms Bellows in Minute 58, item 4 of the Report of Cabinet dated 3 February 2016.

All members of the Council had been granted dispensations to speak and to vote on Minute No. 61, the 2016/17 Council Tax.

54 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Members were reminded that following the introduction in 2014 of regulations allowing the public to record local government meetings, the Council had agreed to make its own sound recordings of meetings held in the Council Chamber.

The necessary equipment to facilitate recordings had now been installed and recording of Council meetings would now take place, starting with tonight's meeting.

Since the last Council meeting the Chairman had been privileged to take part in a variety of events throughout Hampshire. These had been listed in the latest information bulletin.

The Chairman highlighted the success of the NFDC Go Digital events currently being held in New Milton. These events were drop-in sessions where individuals received expert advice from one of the NFDC Digital Champions. The Chairman had attended the digital drop-in, at New Milton Library, on the 17 February, which had been a great success. The Chairman thanked the Digital Champions.

Forthcoming Charity Fundraising Events

- Saturday 26 March at 2.00 pm the Chairman would be abseiling down the Spinnaker Tower. Members could sponsor the Chairman at this even by contacting her Personal Assistant, Donna Miller.
- Saturday 2 April, the Chairman would host a charity dinner dance at the Balmer Lawn Hotel, Brockenhurst which would be her main fundraising event for the year.

All funds raised would go towards the Chairman's two chosen charities, Oakhaven Hospice and the Firefly Orphanage in Nepal.

55 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were none.

56 REPORT OF AUDIT COMMITTEE**Report of Audit Committee**

Cllr O'Sullivan, Chairman of the Audit Committee, presented the report of the meeting held on 22 January 2016.

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.

57 REPORTS OF GENERAL PURPOSES & LICENSING COMMITTEE

Cllrs Armstrong, Binns, Poole and Wade disclosed non-pecuniary interests in item 2 of the report of the General Purposes & Licensing Committee dated 29 January 2016 as members of Hythe & Dibden Parish Council. They concluded that there were no issues under common law that prevented them from remaining in the meeting to speak and to vote. There was no discussion on this item.

Cllr Clarke, Chairman of the General Purposes & Licensing Committee, presented the reports of the meetings held on 8 and 29 January 2016.

Cllr Clarke reported that the Industrial Relations Committee, after considering this matter at their meeting on 18 February, had supported the adoption of the Pay Policy Statement.

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.

58 REPORTS OF CABINET

Cllr Ms Bellows disclosed a pecuniary interest in item 4 of the report of the Cabinet dated 3 February, on the grounds that she was a Council tenant. There was no discussion on this item. She did not vote.

The Leader of the Council, as Chairman of the Cabinet, presented the reports of the meetings held on 6 January and 3 February 2016.

3 February 2016, Item 3 – The Medium Term Financial Plan and Annual Budget 2016/17

The Chairman moved that Standing Order 47.6 be suspended to allow the Leader of the Council and the Leader of the Opposition to exceed the time limit for making their speeches. The motion was seconded and carried.

The Chairman ruled that in accordance with Standing Order 47.11 she would allow more than one amendment to be proposed and discussed at the same time.

The Leader of the Council made the statement on the Administration's proposed budget, attached as Appendix 1 to these minutes. He moved an amendment to recommendation (a) that the General Fund Net Budget Requirement will now be £17,191,771.

The Deputy Leader of the Council seconded the recommendation with the amendment.

The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group then made a statement, attached as Appendix 2 to these minutes.

Members discussed the Cabinet's budget proposals together with the Liberal Democrat Leader's speech.

Some members expressed the view that the Liberal Democrat Leader had been contradictory in his comment regarding the need to reduce the number of District Councillors given that the Liberal Democrat Party had promoted an increase in the number of County Councillors in Eastleigh. However, other members agreed that there was merit in reconsidering the reduction of members on the District Council, as well as investigating the benefits of a committee system.

The Deputy Leader of the Council addressed the comment made by the Liberal Democrat Leader regarding the negative responses when Executive decisions were called in. He stated that all members of the Council, including the Opposition, had plenty of opportunity to raise concerns before decisions were made, therefore avoiding the need to call in decisions for review in the first place.

A recorded vote was taken on the Administration's proposed budget, with amendment. The outcome was:

Members voting for:	53
Members voting against:	2
Abstentions	0

Details are shown in Appendix 3 to these minutes.

The motion was carried.

RESOLVED:

That the reports of the Cabinet dated 6 January and 3 February 2016 be received and the recommendations adopted, subject to recommendation (a) of Item 3 of the Cabinet report dated 3 February 2016 (Medium Term Financial Plan and The Annual Budget 2016/17) being amended to reflect that the General Fund Net Budget Requirement will now be £17,191,771.

59 QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 22

There were none.

60 QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDERS UNDER STANDING ORDER 22A

There were none.

61 COUNCIL TAX 2016/17

All members of the Council had been granted dispensations to speak and to vote on this matter.

The Council considered the Council Tax for 2016/17.

The Chairman moved that under recommendation 10.4 (page 9) of the report, to correct an arithmetical error, the totals for the precepting authorities for Bands A and G dwellings be amended to **£868.22** for Band A and **£2,170.56** for Band G. The amendment was seconded.

A recorded vote was taken on the recommendation with the above amendment. The outcome was:

Members voting for:	53
Members voting against:	2
Abstentions	0

Details are shown in Appendix 4 to these minutes.

The motion was carried.

RESOLVED:

1. That it be noted that on 2 December 2015 the Council calculated the Council Tax Base for the year 2016/17:
 - (a) for the whole Council area as 69,632.30 [Item T in the formula in Section 31B(1) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the "Act")]; and
 - (b) for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a Parish precept relates as in the attached Appendix 3.
2. To calculate that the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2016/17 (excluding Parish Precepts) is £11,026,971.
3. That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2016/17 in accordance with Sections 31A, 31B and 34 to 36 of the Local Government and Finance Act 1992 as amended by the Localism Act 2011: -
 - (a) £142,052,117 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils.
 - (b) £125,890,440 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.

- (c) £16,161,677 being the amount by which the aggregate at 3(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 3(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31B(1) of the Act).
- (d) £232.10 being the amount at 3(c) above (Item R), all divided by the Council Tax Base, Item T (1(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts).
- (e) £5,134,706 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act.
- (f) £158.36 being the amount at 3(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 3(e) above by Item T (1(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year specifically for the District Council. There are no non-parished areas.
- (g)

LOCAL COUNCIL AREA

	£
ASHURST & COLBURY	187.01
BEAULIEU	173.84
BOLDRE	178.09
BRAMSHAW	177.42
BRANGSORE	208.62
BREAMORE	180.55
BROCKENHURST	200.85
BURLEY	175.57
COPYTHORNE	170.80
DAMERHAM	196.22
DENNY LODGE	192.16
EAST BOLDRE	196.45
ELLINGHAM HARBRIDGE & IBSLEY	189.91
EXBURY & LEPE	178.85
FAWLEY	266.70
FORDINGBRIDGE	240.43
GODSHILL	206.36
HALE	193.37
HORDLE	198.94
HYDE	176.54
HYTHE & DIBDEN	244.08
LYMINGTON & PENNINGTON	255.37
LYNDHURST	208.98
MARCHWOOD	262.40
MARTIN	187.87
MILFORD-ON-SEA	191.96
MINSTEAD	183.92
NETLEY MARSH	178.27
NEW MILTON	217.16
RINGWOOD	246.38
ROCKBOURNE	233.04
SANDLEHEATH	183.09
SOPLEY	226.38
SWAY	193.01
TOTTON & ELING	282.03
WHITSBURY	179.59
WOODGREEN	186.64

being the amounts given by adding to the amount at 3(f) above the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned above divided in each case by the amount at 1(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

- (h) These are the District plus Town/Parish Council elements only. See below for the full amounts of Council Tax.

LOCAL COUNCIL AREA	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
ASHURST & COLBURY	124.68	145.45	166.24	187.01	228.57	270.12	311.69	374.02
BEAULIEU	115.90	135.21	154.53	173.84	212.47	251.10	289.74	347.68
BOLDRE	118.73	138.52	158.31	178.09	217.66	257.24	296.82	356.18
BRAMSHAW	118.29	137.99	157.71	177.42	216.85	256.27	295.71	354.84
BRANSGORE	139.09	162.26	185.45	208.62	254.98	301.34	347.71	417.24
BREAMORE	120.37	140.43	160.49	180.55	220.67	260.79	300.92	361.10
BROCKENHURST	133.91	156.22	178.54	200.85	245.48	290.11	334.76	401.70
BURLEY	117.05	136.56	156.07	175.57	214.58	253.60	292.62	351.14
COPYTHORNE	113.87	132.85	151.83	170.80	208.75	246.71	284.67	341.60
DAMERHAM	130.82	152.62	174.42	196.22	239.82	283.43	327.04	392.44
DENNY LODGE	128.11	149.46	170.81	192.16	234.86	277.56	320.27	384.32
EAST BOLDRE	130.97	152.80	174.63	196.45	240.10	283.76	327.42	392.90
ELLINGHAM HARBRIDGE & IBSLEY	126.61	147.71	168.81	189.91	232.11	274.31	316.52	379.82
EXBURY & LEPE	119.24	139.11	158.98	178.85	218.59	258.34	298.09	357.70
FAWLEY	177.81	207.43	237.07	266.70	325.97	385.23	444.51	533.40
FORDINGBRIDGE	160.29	187.00	213.72	240.43	293.86	347.29	400.72	480.86
GODSHILL	137.58	160.50	183.44	206.36	252.22	298.07	343.94	412.72
HALE	128.92	150.40	171.89	193.37	236.34	279.31	322.29	386.74
HORDLE	132.63	154.73	176.84	198.94	243.15	287.36	331.57	397.88
HYDE	117.70	137.31	156.93	176.54	215.77	255.00	294.24	353.08
HYTHE & DIBDEN	162.73	189.84	216.97	244.08	298.32	352.56	406.81	488.16
LYMINGTON & PENNINGTON	170.25	198.62	227.00	255.37	312.12	368.87	425.62	510.74
LYNDHURST	139.33	162.54	185.77	208.98	255.42	301.86	348.31	417.96
MARCHWOOD	174.94	204.09	233.25	262.40	320.71	379.02	437.34	524.80
MARTIN	125.25	146.12	167.00	187.87	229.62	271.37	313.12	375.74
MILFORD-ON-SEA	127.98	149.30	170.64	191.96	234.62	277.27	319.94	383.92
MINSTEAD	122.62	143.05	163.49	183.92	224.79	265.66	306.54	367.84
NETLEY MARSH	118.85	138.66	158.47	178.27	217.88	257.50	297.12	356.54
NEW MILTON	144.78	168.90	193.04	217.16	265.42	313.67	361.94	434.32
RINGWOOD	164.26	191.63	219.01	246.38	301.13	355.88	410.64	492.76
ROCKBOURNE	155.37	181.25	207.15	233.04	284.83	336.61	388.41	466.08
SANDLEHEATH	122.07	142.40	162.75	183.09	223.78	264.46	305.16	366.18
SOPLEY	150.93	176.07	201.23	226.38	276.69	326.99	377.31	452.76
SWAY	128.68	150.12	171.57	193.01	235.90	278.79	321.69	386.02
TOTTON & ELING	188.03	219.36	250.70	282.03	344.70	407.37	470.06	564.06
WHITSBURY	119.73	139.68	159.64	179.59	219.50	259.41	299.32	359.18
WOODGREEN	124.43	145.17	165.91	186.64	228.11	269.59	311.07	373.28

being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at 3(g) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation Band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

- That it be noted that Hampshire County Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire and the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority have issued precepts for 2016/17 to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each category of dwellings in the Council's area as indicated below:

PRECEPTING AUTHORITY

PRECEPTING AUTHORITY	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL	719.52	839.44	959.36	1,079.28	1,319.12	1,558.96	1,798.80	2,158.56
POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR HAMPSHIRE AUTHORITY	106.97	124.80	142.63	160.46	196.12	231.78	267.43	320.92
HAMPSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY	41.73	48.69	55.64	62.60	76.51	90.42	104.33	125.20
	868.22	1,012.93	1,157.63	1,302.34	1,591.75	1,881.16	2,170.56	2,604.68

5. That the Chief Executive (S.151 Officer) be given delegated authority to implement any variation to the overall level of Council Tax arising from the final notification of the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority precept.
6. That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 3(h) and 4 above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011), hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2016/17 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings shown on the next page:-

LOCAL COUNCIL AREA	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
ASHURST & COLBURY	992.90	1,158.38	1,323.87	1,489.35	1,820.32	2,151.28	2,482.25	2,978.70
BEAULIEU	984.12	1,148.14	1,312.16	1,476.18	1,804.22	2,132.26	2,460.30	2,952.36
BOLDRE	986.95	1,151.45	1,315.94	1,480.43	1,809.41	2,138.40	2,467.38	2,960.86
BRAMSHAW	986.51	1,150.92	1,315.34	1,479.76	1,808.60	2,137.43	2,466.27	2,959.52
BRANSGORE	1,007.31	1,175.19	1,343.08	1,510.96	1,846.73	2,182.50	2,518.27	3,021.92
BREAMORE	988.59	1,153.36	1,318.12	1,482.89	1,812.42	2,141.95	2,471.48	2,965.78
BROCKENHURST	1,002.13	1,169.15	1,336.17	1,503.19	1,837.23	2,171.27	2,505.32	3,006.38
BURLEY	985.27	1,149.49	1,313.70	1,477.91	1,806.33	2,134.76	2,463.18	2,955.82
COPYTHORNE	982.09	1,145.78	1,309.46	1,473.14	1,800.50	2,127.87	2,455.23	2,946.28
DAMERHAM	999.04	1,165.55	1,332.05	1,498.56	1,831.57	2,164.59	2,497.60	2,997.12
DENNY LODGE	996.33	1,162.39	1,328.44	1,494.50	1,826.61	2,158.72	2,490.83	2,989.00
EAST BOLDRE	999.19	1,165.73	1,332.26	1,498.79	1,831.85	2,164.92	2,497.98	2,997.58
ELLINGHAM HARBRIDGE & IBSLEY	994.83	1,160.64	1,326.44	1,492.25	1,823.86	2,155.47	2,487.08	2,984.50
EXBURY & LEPE	987.46	1,152.04	1,316.61	1,481.19	1,810.34	2,139.50	2,468.65	2,962.38
FAWLEY	1,046.03	1,220.36	1,394.70	1,569.04	1,917.72	2,266.39	2,615.07	3,138.08
FORDINGBRIDGE	1,028.51	1,199.93	1,371.35	1,542.77	1,885.61	2,228.45	2,571.28	3,085.54
GODSHILL	1,005.80	1,173.43	1,341.07	1,508.70	1,843.97	2,179.23	2,514.50	3,017.40
HALE	997.14	1,163.33	1,329.52	1,495.71	1,828.09	2,160.47	2,492.85	2,991.42
HORDLE	1,000.85	1,167.66	1,334.47	1,501.28	1,834.90	2,168.52	2,502.13	3,002.56
HYDE	985.92	1,150.24	1,314.56	1,478.88	1,807.52	2,136.16	2,464.80	2,957.76
HYTHE & DIBDEN	1,030.95	1,202.77	1,374.60	1,546.42	1,890.07	2,233.72	2,577.37	3,092.84
LYMINGTON & PENNINGTON	1,038.47	1,211.55	1,384.63	1,557.71	1,903.87	2,250.03	2,596.18	3,115.42
LYNDHURST	1,007.55	1,175.47	1,343.40	1,511.32	1,847.17	2,183.02	2,518.87	3,022.64
MARCHWOOD	1,043.16	1,217.02	1,390.88	1,564.74	1,912.46	2,260.18	2,607.90	3,129.48
MARTIN	993.47	1,159.05	1,324.63	1,490.21	1,821.37	2,152.53	2,483.68	2,980.42
MILFORD-ON-SEA	996.20	1,162.23	1,328.27	1,494.30	1,826.37	2,158.43	2,490.50	2,988.60
MINSTEAD	990.84	1,155.98	1,321.12	1,486.26	1,816.54	2,146.82	2,477.10	2,972.52
NETLEY MARSH	987.07	1,151.59	1,316.10	1,480.61	1,809.63	2,138.66	2,467.68	2,961.22
NEW MILTON	1,013.00	1,181.83	1,350.67	1,519.50	1,857.17	2,194.83	2,532.50	3,039.00
RINGWOOD	1,032.48	1,204.56	1,376.64	1,548.72	1,892.88	2,237.04	2,581.20	3,097.44
ROCKBOURNE	1,023.59	1,194.18	1,364.78	1,535.38	1,876.58	2,217.77	2,558.97	3,070.76
SANDLEHEATH	990.29	1,155.33	1,320.38	1,485.43	1,815.53	2,145.62	2,475.72	2,970.86
SOPLY	1,019.15	1,189.00	1,358.86	1,528.72	1,868.44	2,208.15	2,547.87	3,057.44
SWAY	996.90	1,163.05	1,329.20	1,495.35	1,827.65	2,159.95	2,492.25	2,990.70
TOTTON & ELING	1,056.25	1,232.29	1,408.33	1,584.37	1,936.45	2,288.53	2,640.62	3,168.74
WHITSBURY	987.95	1,152.61	1,317.27	1,481.93	1,811.25	2,140.57	2,469.88	2,963.86
WOODGREEN	992.65	1,158.10	1,323.54	1,488.98	1,819.86	2,150.75	2,481.63	2,977.96

62 MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND PANELS

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

CHAIRMAN

Attachments: Minute 58 – Appendices 1, 2 and 3
Minute 61 – Appendix 4

COUNCIL 22 FEBRUARY 2016

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL – BUDGET SPEECH

“Challenge and Change”

This is my first budget speech of the new administration and my theme is “Challenge and Change”.

Last May the New Forest residents trusted the conservatives with a magnificent mandate to continue to run New Forest District Council. With 58 out of 60 councillors elected, our best ever majority. I believe this was because of our well planned long term view of running the council, with a positive honest approach with sound financial management. I urge all councillors long standing or newly elected to observe our manifesto and its pledges in conjunction with the corporate plan as we go forward. We are all here because we recognise that we face a challenge and there is a need for change.

We are all well aware of the significant financial challenges. We have managed our way through the last few years very successfully and been able to balance the budget and deliver no increase in Council Tax for six consecutive years. This has been a tremendous achievement. However, looking forward, the continued scale of reductions in government grant leave us with no option if we wish to ensure our community is provided with valued and quality services. This we have thought long and hard over but for this next year we will ask our local taxpayers to meet an increase. The government expect us to increase Council Tax by £5 at Band D, but our good housekeeping and financial management mean that for 2016/17 we will only increase our Council Tax at Band D by £2.60. In our Manifesto we said we would keep down Council Tax. I believe our increase of only 5p per week for our services helps deliver our promise to council taxpayers who face sizeable increases from others this year.

One thing that I will not change is that there will be no last minute gimmicks, despite the government changes we have only recently received. We will keep planning our way forward and delivering what we say we will. With this in mind, at the last Cabinet we shared our areas for review and asked for our financial strategy to be revisited early in the year to allow all members to contribute to what we need to do to meet the challenge ahead. Our reviews need to be approached with an open mind to what is right for the New Forest and helps us meet our challenges. Despite what some of you may have read, we have not reached any outcomes yet. We will undertake reviews in an open and transparent way that engages with our staff, customers and members.

Within our Senior Management we have seen much change. David Yates after 16 years left the Council as Chief Executive. He made a huge contribution to the success of the Council during his time and I wish him an enjoyable retirement. Amongst other senior managers to have left the Council recently are John Mascal, Martin Devine, Annie Righton and Ken Connolly and next month Glynne Miles will also be leaving. All of these managers made a big contribution to the work of the Council and I wish to thank them for all they did and, on behalf of all members of the Council, I wish them all the best for the future whether it be in retirement or some new venture.

Bob Jackson became our new Chief Executive and has commenced the process of change that is needed. The new Executive Team is in place and they are well down the road to appointing a new group of senior managers that will lead the council management forward over the next few years. This is a lot of change, but not only is it needed to meet the financial challenge, it has brought with it an energy and enthusiasm that will help us meet the

challenges that lie ahead. As Cabinet, we will continue to work closely with the new senior management team.

The special and unique nature of what makes the New Forest what it is, I believe has been clearly identified within our Corporate Plan and we will deliver on what is important to our residents and businesses.

The importance of growing a more prosperous New Forest remains our key priority. We have put tremendous effort into supporting our local economy and maintaining its vibrancy.

In November New Forest Business Partnership celebrated the 10th annual New Forest Brilliance in Business Awards. From the eight category winners, Green Close Hotels (who own Careys Manor & Montagu Arms Hotels) were announced as the New Forest Business of the Year. NFBP's membership has doubled over the past 12 months and their ever growing events calendar has provided even more support for local New Forest businesses.

In early December the 2016 Brand New Forest Card was launched during Small Business Saturday at Ringwood's Christmas Fair. At the event, the town also celebrated its award as Brand New Forest Town of the Year 2016. BNF Card sales have already exceeded 4000 with nearly 300 businesses providing card offers.

In February, NFDC and a variety of local tourism businesses worked together to deliver a New Forest presence at the Daily Telegraph Outdoor Show 2016 at Excel, London. This stand display was twice the size of 2015 and over 2000 visitors signed up to the New Forest consumer database which now measures over 30,000.

The provision of affordable homes remains a key objective for us. Last year we were one of only two councils in the Country that has maintained its housing stock at the same size i.e. we have managed to replace the homes that we have sold under Right to Buy. We are now starting to build significant numbers of new homes (e.g. at North Milton) and there are more affordable housing development opportunities in the pipeline.

As we review our local plan the need for more housing will become a challenge. This is a national challenge as there is a national shortage. I believe we all locally accept that we will in future see more housing. This will be a significant change and we will need to work closely with our local communities to deliver what is both needed and acceptable.

We continue to deliver for our community through the provision of services which are needed. Our weekly Refuse Collection services remains very valued, our Health & Leisure Centres are popular with over 1.6 million visitors and the tenants within our 5,000 Council homes continue to be very satisfied as demonstrated by satisfaction surveys. Our Housing finances are in good shape because we've invested in our stock (with 99% of homes meeting the decent homes standard) and we've improved rent collections and reduced void turnaround times. The way we have progressed the reconstruction of the Beach Huts at Milford is another example of us working with our local communities to deliver real outcomes that work.

Our Corporate Plan also recognises the need we have to work with others. This we will continue to do and specific areas like the Community Safety Partnership are being refreshed. In addition, our everyday relationships with Towns and Parishes and neighbouring Councils are important to us and we will look to build on all of these. I should mention the Devolution of Hampshire and IOW bid. We have supported our neighbours in a responsible way but have made no commitments.

One of the best highlights of the year is the Volunteers evening hosted by the Chairman. This year was no exception. The opportunity to speak and hear the stories of what so many individuals do to support others within our community is a tremendous experience and something I would wish to see celebrated more.

Challenges are a way of life for the Council and our ability to be able to change and overcome them is our challenge and I believe the Budget as presented is another step along that path. My grateful thanks to all councillors, staff, cabinet members and our new chief executive in getting us to this point. I commend the Budget to you.

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Liberal Democrat Leader - Budget Speech February 2016

I don't think any of us can remember a more difficult time for local government, having to deal with severe cuts in funding from central government, whilst having to pull off the almost impossible trick of keeping services running whilst avoiding punitive council tax increases.

In all that we do, we have to have regard for what the people of the New Forest want.

I want to start by saying something about delivery. Delivery is the bit that our officers and staff do, carrying out the wishes of elected members. We have been particularly blessed by having high quality officers over the years. It's always sad when really good ones move on.

Never more have I had that sense when attending the leaving celebration of our Director, John Mascall. It was patently obvious, just from the number of people who attended, what high regard and respect he was held in.

Such times, bring us together and help us reflect. John was one of a number of really good officers and there are others who will follow.

So a general thank you, to all officers, some of whom slipped away rather more quietly, for all the work that you did and of course a special thanks to those who are still with us !

Housing

We are all well aware the Council has had a waiting list of about five thousand or so people waiting for a home to live in, for over a decade.

Whatever view you take on the "Right to Buy" policy, it has meant the District has lost half it's council housing stock. Housing demand, especially for young people, has never been higher.

We, or I should say, our taxpayers, are paying £300,000 a year putting people up in temporary Bed & Breakfast accommodation. It's great news for B & B owners but bad news for the families in this temporary accommodation and bad news for the taxpayers. I can only hope that the policies and practices of this council start to turn things around – and quickly.

I hope we can learn some lessons from the situation at Savoy House, Totton, late last year. As I said at the time, well done for finding alternative accommodation for the fifty or so residents affected, but it surely can't be right where things have got to the stage where there are damp & mould health issues, fire safety risks, serious defects in the building and asbestos. A long hard look at the Councils' leasing arrangements is required.

Leisure & Health

I recently visited and was shown around Totton's Health & leisure Centre. It a really high quality facility, well run, with good staff. I'm sure this is true of the other centres.

The staff will be somewhat perplexed that you are once again reviewing the structures and the model of delivery with a view to achieving efficiencies, when you have already ruled out my

suggestion of a fresh look at the number of Councillors we have, the need for so many and the savings that could be achieved if we downsized in line with the staffing structures.

I would guess that we all agree, the council should be encouraging people to exercise and lead healthy lifestyles. This is especially important for the increasingly older population.

One older customer of our Health & Leisure Centres, complained that they don't feel welcome anymore. It seems likely that some will have been put off renewing an annual membership when asked to pay an extra £121 a year.

I think also that the recent research that shows children, in this relatively affluent country, are so woefully low on the happiness scores. I think that this Council has a role to play in examining the causes of that and thinking about what we might do, with others, to try and reverse this. This is the next generation we are concerned with. Frankly, it looks to me like we aren't given them enough freedom to play. If I have an amendment, it's that we set up a task & finish group to deal with this.

I also want this Council to move quickly and appoint a Champion for mental health. We are a little bit behind others, including Hampshire County Council. It's partly symbolic, to demonstrate that we understand what a neglected area this has been in the past, but also practical, to have somebody supporting initiatives that improve the lot of people who have mental health challenges and oversee our policies with this topic uppermost in their minds.

Environment

I think I was right to request a review of car parking charges across the New Forest. The world won't collapse if it's delayed a year, but I do think that the opportunity to generate extra income, better manage traffic and help local businesses has been delayed.

The council should be full square against any cuts to the Household Waste Recycling Centres in the New Forest. Any closure will likely lead to more fly tipping and increase the costs to this council. You members can join the 1,900 residents who have already signed the petition I raised about the Marchwood tip, as well as contributing to the formal consultation.

It would be remiss of me not to mention the issues of dog fouling, on our pavements and on our green areas, including recreation grounds and sports pitches. I cannot be the only Councillor who is always getting complaints about this. Even where we supply bins, the problem persists. It's time, I think, to get tough and start prosecuting the irresponsible owners. We have just had another year of zero prosecutions. We have those powers, we should use them and perhaps more importantly, we should advertise the fact that we are doing so.

Air quality is also a major issue, somewhat surprising when you consider this is the New Forest. I can exclusively reveal that a report will be published tomorrow that will shock many people when it comes to determining the risk to human health from polluted air. There are no safe levels, which is why I won't be supporting any moves to revoke Air Quality Management areas in the District. I urge all members to read the research which will be heavily covered in the media, embargoed until Midnight tonight.

Governance

I'm supportive of restructuring the Council, to make it more effective and to reflect the changing economic conditions that the authority operates in. Normally, with such severe cuts in income, the phrase "No Stone unturned" is the phrase in looking to make savings.

Let me say here – just as I did at Hampshire County Council – I am no fan of the Cabinet system. It means that only a handful of members get to make most of the decisions.

It surely can't be right that, at a time when we are making the case for devolution, a transfer of powers from central government to local government, we aren't doing anything at all about empowering locally elected Councillors to discuss and vote on things by way of a committee system.

We need to get our own house in order, to make this council more democratic, before we can adopt new powers. I don't know whether you have long, good quality debates at your conservative group meetings. Perhaps you do. The way in which scrutiny works is sadly lacking. I have tried the method of "Calling In" decisions. Any fair minded individual would say that I had a reasonable point asking why car parking charges weren't being reviewed and the wisdom of older people being asked to pay a massive increase in health & leisure Centre memberships.

My experience wasn't that the committees who considered the call in, having a good, robust debate about the advantages and disadvantages of what I was suggesting. All I got was a rather bad tempered and defensive statement from the Portfolio Holders who had the attitude that I was entirely out of order challenging them and committees who felt it inappropriate to reconsider the issue afresh.

What I want is to empower the back benchers, Yes, I am your Champion ! I want to give you a sense that it is worthwhile attending formal meetings of the council, that you can shape and change policy for the better.

I know that a lot of members here supported my call to reduce the number of Councillors, both to save money and mirror the cuts that we are making in staff and management.

Many authorities, up and down the country, of different political persuasion, have decided this is only the right thing to do. I urge you to re-think your decision. It's a moral obligation. Most of the public think that we could manage perfectly well with rather less Councillors, especially in wards that are represented by two people.

The Council motto is "Old but ever New", it isn't "Same old, Same old". When things change and we can do more, by means of technology or other ways of working, embrace the changes.

We are all about protecting the quality of life, whether it's the air that we breath, providing great homes for people to live in, safe & secure communities with easy access to public transport, leisure facilities that people of all ages welcome.

Underpinning all that we do should be a sense of social justice. Life is difficult for many in our community. The people who are forced to use food banks, the people without housing, the youngster who can't work because there is no bus service. Those who who don't enjoy good physical or mental health.

As leader of the opposition, I could have utilised some officer time, putting together and distributing an alternative budget. It seemed to me a pretty fruitless thing to do. Even if secretly asked George Osborne, to put it together – not one conservative would vote for it, although I would have some fun revealing the truth afterwards !

So, I will maintain my stance. I will work constructively much, or even most, of the time. However, it is hugely to the benefit of this Council that there is an opposition. Two of us who can question the wisdom of decisions, sometimes putting out a public challenge, holding you to account and asking that you justify what you are doing.

Finally, can I just say, that a lot of you have been looking rather depressed and despondent in recent months. I don't know if this is because of the awfully long winter, the economic situation or indeed the need to make cuts upon cuts which you don't always support.

There are vacancies in the Lib Dem party for anyone wanting to cross the floor, who finds themselves agreeing with the things that I say and do and the campaigns I run. I'm not saying your life will be at all easier or more comfortable. Why, you have even decided to take away our office and make us homeless !

But Lib Dems don't require all the trappings. I do think some of you are in the wrong party,

particularly those that are for staying in the European Union.... and you may like to remember that there is more potential to grow my party than your own.

So that's it Chairman, no specific budget amendment that others can pick apart and ridicule, but an important contribution which underlines a different vision for this authority. Do, please consider my ideas for what we might be able to do for increasing happiness amongst our children – and not entirely unconnected, appointing a Champion for mental health. Thank you.

APPENDIX 3

RECORDED VOTE MINUTE NO. 58 – SUBSTANTIVE MOTION ON ITEM 3 OF THE REPORT OF THE CABINET DATED 3 FEBRUARY 2016

Votes For		Votes Against	Abstentions
Cllr Alvey	Cllr Mrs Hoare	Cllr Harrison	
Cllr Mrs Andrews	Cllr Mrs Jackman	Cllr Wade	
Cllr Andrews	Cllr Kendal		
Cllr Armstrong	Cllr Mrs Lane		
Cllr Beck	Cllr Mrs Lovelace		
Cllr Mrs Beeton	Cllr Lucas		
Cllr Ms Bellows	Cllr Mrs McEvoy		
Cllr Mrs Bennison	Cllr Olliff-Cooper		
Cllr Binns	Cllr O'Sullivan		
Cllr Blunden	Cllr Penman		
Cllr Britton	Cllr Poole		
Cllr Mrs Brooks	Cllr Puttock		
Cllr Carpenter	Cllr Rickman		
Cllr Mrs Cerasoli	Cllr Rippon-		
Cllr Clarke	Swaine		
Cllr Mrs Cleary	Cllr Russell		
Cllr Coombes	Cllr Ms Sevier		
Cllr Ms Crisell	Cllr Steele		
Cllr Davies	Cllr Thierry		
Cllr Davis	Cllr Mrs Thorne		
Cllr Ms Ford	Cllr Tipp		
Cllr Frampton	Cllr Tungate		
Cllr Glass	Cllr Wappet		
Cllr L Harris	Cllr Mrs Ward		
Cllr M Harris	Cllr Ward		
Cllr E Heron	Cllr White		
Cllr J Heron	Cllr Mrs Wyeth		

Total:

53

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APPENDIX 4

RECORDED VOTE MINUTE NO. 61 - THE 2015/16 COUNCIL TAX

Votes For		Votes Against	Abstentions
Cllr Alvey	Cllr Mrs Jackman	Cllr Harrison	
Cllr Mrs Andrews	Cllr Kendal	Cllr Wade	
Cllr Andrews	Cllr Mrs Lane		
Cllr Armstrong	Cllr Mrs Lovelace		
Cllr Beck	Cllr Lucas		
Cllr Mrs Beeton	Cllr Mrs McEvoy		
Cllr Ms Bellows	Cllr Olliff-Cooper		
Cllr Mrs Bennison	Cllr O'Sullivan		
Cllr Binns	Cllr Penman		
Cllr Blunden	Cllr Poole		
Cllr Britton	Cllr Puttock		
Cllr Mrs Brooks	Cllr Rickman		
Cllr Carpenter	Cllr Rippon-		
Cllr Mrs Cerasoli	Swaine		
Cllr Clarke	Cllr Russell		
Cllr Mrs Cleary	Cllr Ms Sevier		
Cllr Coombes	Cllr Steele		
Cllr Ms Crisell	Cllr Thierry		
Cllr Davies	Cllr Mrs Thorne		
Cllr Davis	Cllr Tipp		
Cllr Ms Ford	Cllr Tungate		
Cllr Frampton	Cllr Wappet		
Cllr Glass	Cllr Mrs Ward		
Cllr L Harris	Cllr Ward		
Cllr M Harris	Cllr White		
Cllr E Heron	Cllr Mrs Wyeth		
Cllr J Heron			
Cllr Mrs Hoare			

Total:

53

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