

12 DECEMBER 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, 12 December 2016

* Cllr G C Beck (Chairman)

* Cllr Mrs C V Ward (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 A J Hoare

Councillors:

* Mrs M D Holding
* 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
* 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 Ms M Stephens

Apologies:

Cllrs Mrs Beeton, Dow, Mrs Lane, O'Sullivan, Rippon-Swaine, Miss Sevier, Thierry and Wade.

37 MINUTES**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2016 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

38 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs Frampton, Harrison, Mrs Jackman, Kendal and Mrs Wyeth in Minute No. 41, item 2 of the Report of the Cabinet dated 2 November 2016.

Cllr Kendal in Minute No. 41, item 2 of the Report of the Cabinet dated 7 December 2016.

39 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**Brilliance in Business Awards**

On Wednesday 30 November, the Chairman, along with the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive, had attended the Brilliance in Business Awards at the Careys Manor Hotel, Brockenhurst where awards had been presented to 7 local businesses chosen from 21 nominees. The Council considered the awards extremely important in recognising the valuable contribution businesses made to the area.

The New Forest Veterans' Christmas Party

The Chairman had welcomed 54 of the New Forest's veterans to a special Christmas Party at Dibden Golf Centre on Friday 2 December 2016. The event had also been attended by 12 representatives from the 17 Port and Maritime Regiment Royal Logistics Corps. The event enabled the Chairman, on behalf of the Council, to thank veterans for their service.

Volunteers' Reception

The Chairman had hosted the annual volunteers' reception on Thursday 8 December. The event provided an opportunity to thank the volunteers for all the good work they did for the New Forest.

Forthcoming events

On Saturday 11 February 2017 the Chairman would host a charity dinner at Hoburne Bashley. Further information regarding the event would be sent to members in due course.

Christmas Greetings

The Chairman wished members and officers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

40 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were none.

41 REPORTS OF THE CABINET

Cllrs Frampton, Harrison, Mrs Jackman, Rickman and Mrs Wyeth disclosed non-pecuniary interests in item 2 of the Report of the Cabinet dated 2 November 2016 as members of the New Forest National Park Authority. They concluded that there were no issues under common law that prevented them from remaining in the meeting to speak. There was no vote on this item.

Cllrs Mrs Jackman, Kendal and Mrs Wyeth disclosed non-pecuniary interests in item 2 of the Report of the Cabinet dated 2 November 2016 as Trustees of the New Forest Ninth Centenary Trust and Cllrs Mrs Jackman and Mrs Wyeth also as members of the New Forest National Park Authority. They concluded that there were no issues under common law that prevented them from remaining in the meeting to speak. There was no vote on this item.

Cllr Kendal disclosed a non-pecuniary interest in item 2 of the Report of the Cabinet dated 7 December 2016 as a member of Hampshire County Council. He concluded that there were no issues under common law that prevented him from remaining in the meeting to speak. There was no vote on this item.

The Leader of the Council, as Chairman of the Cabinet, presented the reports of the meetings held on 2 November and 7 December 2016.

On the motion that the reports be received and the recommendations be adopted: -

Item 2 (2 November 2016) – Review of Tourism Service

Cllr Harrison spoke against the Cabinet's decision to withdraw the Visitor Information Centre in Lyndhurst as he felt that there continued to be sufficient demand to justify keeping the Centre open. The service provided was highly valued, as demonstrated by an on-line petition advocating the retention of the Centre, which had been signed by nearly one thousand people. Cllr Harrison felt strongly that the face-to-face interaction provided by staff was critical to the visitor experience and would persuade tourists to return to the New Forest. Cllr Harrison hoped to lobby the New Forest National Park Authority on the matter.

Other members spoke in support of the Cabinet's decision, expressing the view that there was a misunderstanding regarding the future of the building and the services provided. The closure of the Visitor Information Centre would not affect the overall operation of the New Forest Visitor Centre in Lyndhurst, which was run by the New Forest Ninth Centenary Trust. Volunteers working for the Trust would continue to provide their valuable services. The New Forest Tourism Association would manage the destination marketing of the New Forest as the experts in that field. Members felt that given this, and the increasing use of on-line technology for accessing information and making bookings, the decision was appropriate and necessary.

The Leader of the Council confirmed also that the Ninth Centenary Trust would not be prejudiced financially by the decision to withdraw the Visitor Information Service.

Item 1 (7 December 2016) – Local Government Review Update

Some members expressed concern regarding the likely detrimental effects on a wide range of key services such as the road network if a Solent City authority was formed. Members felt that the transition period during any change in local

governance would be extremely disruptive and risked the loss of continuity of service provision. Other members considered that the money spent on consultants' reports to inform the devolution debate should have been spent instead on front line services.

It was explained that during the early stages of the devolution discussions it became clear that, in order to safeguard the interests of the residents of the New Forest, this Council had to participate fully in discussions and examine the options. Some of these might have resulted in efficiency savings but had proved to be impractical.

The Leader of the Council said that this Council would continue to champion the outcomes that were in the best interests of the New Forest.

RESOLVED:

That the reports be received and the recommendations be adopted.

42 QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 22

There were none.

43 QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDERS UNDER STANDING ORDER 22A

There were none.

44 MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND PANELS

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

CHAIRMAN