

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Wednesday 26th May 2004 at 7.00pm

PRESENT: Cllr P Chambers
Cllr Mrs B Charlton
Cllr N J Chard
Cllr N R G Clarke
Cllr D E Cracknell
Cllr Mrs L C Ford
Cllr N W Light
Cllr W S Rippon-Swaine
Cllr Mrs V A Sullivan
Cllr B H Terry
Cllr M H Thierry
Cllr N Wood
Cllr Mrs B J Wright
Cllr S C Wright

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr T R Simpson, Town Clerk
Jo Stannard, Deputy Town Clerk

C/4233 ABSENCE

All members were present.

C/4234 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Wright declared a personal but non-prejudicial interest in the Election of Town Mayor as he was employed by one of the candidates. Cllr Mrs Wright declared a personal but non-prejudicial interest in the Election of Town Mayor as she is married to Cllr Wright who is employed by one of the candidates. Both members remained in the room and took part in the voting.

Cllr Chard declared an interest in F/3625 and P/4057 (temporary site for travellers) in the event of these minutes being discussed.

C/4235 ELECTION OF TOWN MAYOR

There were 3 nominations for Town Mayor, as follows:

Cllr Thierry – proposed by Cllr Wright and seconded by Cllr Wood.

Cllr Terry – proposed by Cllr Clarke and seconded by Cllr Light.

Cllr Cracknell – proposed by Cllr Terry and seconded by Cllr Mrs Sullivan.

As Cllr Thierry was a candidate in the election, he indicated that he would, in law, need to stand down as Chairman of the meeting for the purpose of the election. He proposed Cllr Rippon-Swaine as chairman, and this was seconded by Cllr Clarke. Cllr Cracknell proposed Cllr Chard as chairman, and this was seconded by Cllr Terry.

Cllr Rippon-Swaine was elected chairman for the purposes of the election of the Town Mayor.

In order to take part in the election of Town Mayor, Cllr Thierry resigned as Mayor and Cllr Cracknell resigned as Deputy Mayor.

Cllr Cracknell read a statement explaining that he had accepted a nomination for Town Mayor as members had asked him to stand.

Cllr Terry said that he would do the best for Ringwood and its people if elected.

Cllr Rippon-Swaine said that members were very grateful for the work of the preceding Mayor and Deputy, and all that they have done for the town.

A secret ballot was requested by more than 2 members, in accordance with Standing Orders.

The result of the ballot showed that no candidate had an overall majority. Therefore, Cllr Terry, as the candidate with the lowest number of votes was struck off.

Following a second secret ballot, Cllr Thierry was elected as Mayor for the ensuing year.

C/4236

DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE BY TOWN MAYOR

Cllr Thierry signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office, witnessed by the Town Clerk.

C/4237

ELECTION OF DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR

There were 3 nominations for Deputy Town Mayor, as follows:

Cllr Chard – proposed by Cllr Cracknell and seconded by Cllr Mrs Sullivan.

Cllr Ford – proposed by Cllr Clarke and seconded by Cllr Thierry.

Cllr Terry – proposed by Cllr Mrs Charlton and seconded by Cllr Wood.

Cllr Wright and Cllr Light requested a secret ballot.

The result of the ballot showed that no candidate had an overall majority. Therefore, Cllr Terry, as the candidate with the lowest number of votes was struck off.

Following a second secret ballot, Cllr Ford was elected as Deputy Mayor for the ensuing year.

C/4238

DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE BY DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR

Cllr Ford signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office, witnessed by the Town Clerk.

C/4239

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 28th April 2004, having been circulated, were approved and signed as a correct record.

C/4240
MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

i) Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces

Cllr Light presented the minutes of the Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee held on 5th May 2004.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee held on 5th May 2004 be approved and adopted.

ii) Planning, Town & Environment

Cllr Clarke presented the minutes of the Planning, Town & Environment Committee held on 7th May 2004.

P/4059: Cllr Mrs Sullivan was concerned about the proposed scheme of delegation for certain planning applications. She felt that all applications should be considered by Committee. The Town Clerk explained that, by delegating some of the smaller applications that would have no effect on neighbouring properties, the Committee would have more time to concentrate on applications that were of concern. He said that the Committee would consider a report before any delegation scheme was implemented. He added that there would always be the right for members to call for a particular application to be discussed by Committee.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning, Town & Environment Committee held on 7th May 2004 be approved and adopted.

iii) Policy & Finance

Cllr Chard presented the minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee held on 19th May 2004.

F/3628: The Mayor drew members' attention to the recommendation to increase the annual basic members allowance to £584. Cllr Mrs Sullivan asked what happens to money if members do not claim their allowance. The Town Clerk replied that it would go back into reserves and the Policy & Finance Committee would decide what to do with any underspend later in the financial year.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee held on 19th May 2004, including the recommendation at F/3628, be approved and adopted.

C/4241
APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO STANDING COMMITTEES

i) Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces

RESOLVED: That the following members be appointed to the Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee for the remainder of period of office of councillors – Cllrs Chard, Mrs Charlton, Light, Wood, Wright and Mrs Wright, together with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor as ex officio members, leaving one vacancy on this committee.

ii) Planning, Town & Environment

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the following members be appointed to the Planning, Town & Environment Committee for the remainder of period of office of councillors – Cllrs Chard, Clarke, Mrs Charlton, Terry and Wood.
- 2) That the membership of this Committee be reduced to 5 members, plus the Mayor and Deputy Mayor ex officio.

C/4242

PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

There were no members of public who wished to speak.

C/4243

COMMUNICATIONS TO BE RECEIVED

The following correspondence was noted:

- i) It was noted that there was to be a D-Day Memorial Service at 2.30pm in the War Memorial Gardens on Sunday 30th May, and that all Councillors were invited to attend.
- ii) A letter had been received from Babs Platt thanking the Council for presenting her with a Community Award.

C/4244

QUESTIONS OF THE MAYOR

Cllr Cracknell: suggested that members who did not wish to receive the annual allowance to which they were entitled, could claim it and donate it to charity.

Cllr Mrs Sullivan: asked if the Mayor was aware that the ceiling in Waitrose had been removed. She was concerned about unpackaged products being contaminated. It was agreed that the Town Clerk would contact the Environmental Health department at NFDC to pass on these concerns.

C/4245

REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

County Councillor J Waddington had sent his apologies for the meeting but had submitted a report (*Annex 'A'*).

Cllr Ford informed members that the NFDC blue sack scheme would be withdrawn in September and replaced by a clear sack, which could be used for paper, cans and plastic bottles. Cllr Light commented that residents south of Ringwood had not yet been included in the initiative. Cllr Thierry said that it would soon be possible to extend the scheme thanks to the introduction of a new transfer station at Somerley, a new MERF in Alton and a new incinerator in Marchwood.

C/4246

APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

RESOLVED: That members be appointed to the following organisations for the remainder of period of office of councillors or until the representative ceases to be a Town Councillor, whichever is earlier.

ORGANISATION	CURRENT REPRESENTATIVE(S)
New Forest Association of Local Councils	Cllr Clarke Cllr Light
Ringwood Twinning Association	Cllr Thierry
Ringwood & District Community Association	Cllr Terry (Cllr Thierry reserve)
Ringwood & District CAB	Cllr Terry
Forest Forge Theatre Company	Cllr Cracknell Cllr Ford
New Forest Consultative Panel	Cllr Clarke
Youth Liaison	Cllr Terry
The Ringwood Society	Cllr Chard
Ringwood Tourism Group	Cllr Chambers Cllr Clarke
Ringwood United Charities	Cllr Thierry
NFDC Flooding/Drainage Officer	Cllr Light Cllr Chard
HCC Public Transport Representative	Cllr Thierry

It was noted that School Governors had previously been elected for a term of 4 years as follows:

Poulner Junior School – Governor	Mr Jeremy Heron	<i>4 year term ends 1/2/05</i>
Poulner Infant School – Governor	Last term of office held by Mr Jeremy Heron ended on 14/10/03. Waiting for governing body to be re-constituted to see whether a minor authority governor will still be required.	
Ringwood Junior School – Governor	Cllr Mrs Sullivan	<i>4 year term ends 9/11/04</i>
Ringwood Infant School - Governor	Mr Russell Collins	<i>4 year term ends 21/10/05</i>

Cllr Mrs Sullivan said that she had resigned from her role as Governor for Ringwood Junior School as she understood there was no longer a need for minor authority governors.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That it was not necessary to replace Cllr Mrs Sullivan as a Governor of Ringwood Junior School.
- 2) That a letter be sent to Mr Collins thanking him for acting on behalf of the Town Council as a Governor of Ringwood Infant School.

C/4247

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the following Annual Subscriptions for 2004/05 be approved:

South East Employers
Hampshire Association of Parish & Town Councils (HAPTC)
Society of Local Council Clerks
Institute of Groundsmen
Hampshire Wildlife Society
Local Council Advisory Service
Confederation of Burial Authorities
Direct Information Service (NALC)
- 2) That membership of HAPTC be reviewed during the current financial year to evaluate whether the Council was getting value for money.

C/4248

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Planning, Town & Environment	2.05 p.m.	Friday 28 th May
Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces	7.00 p.m.	Wednesday 2 nd June
Policy & Finance	7.00 p.m.	Wednesday 16 th June
Full Council	7.00 p.m.	Wednesday 23 rd June
Planning, Town & Environment	2.05 p.m.	Friday 25 th June

C/4249

URGENT BUSINESS

There was none.

C/4250

ADJOURNEMENT OF MEETING

At 8.00p.m. it was agreed to adjourn the meeting until the end of the individual committee meetings.

On resumption of the meeting at 8.05pm:

C/4251

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO THE POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: That the following members be appointed to the Policy & Finance Committee for the remainder of period of office of councillors – Cllrs Chard, Chambers, Clarke, Light, Rippon-Swaine, Terry, Mrs Sullivan, together with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor as ex officio members.

C/4252

ADJOURNEMENT OF MEETING

At 8.10pm, it was agreed to adjourn the meeting for a meeting of the Policy & Finance Committee.

On resumption of the meeting at 8.15pm:

C/4253

CAR PARKING

The Mayor explained that measures were being proposed to reduce the permitted hours in the long stay car park and to consider the use of the Rotary picnic area to make it less practical for people parking and going out of town to use the car park.

He said that by reducing the permitted hours to, say 8 hours, people working in the town could park in the long-stay car park for 8 hours and then move to the short-stay car park for a further 3 hours if necessary. He confirmed that this would not be in breach of the District Council's no-return policy.

Cllr Chard had grave concerns regarding the proposed use of the Rotary picnic area as there is already a shortage of open space within the town and, in his opinion, it softens the approach to town.

Cllr Cracknell stated that he would not like to see picnic area used for parking. He also did not agree with a reduction of hours in the lorry park. He believed that a multi-storey car park was the only answer.

Cllr Mrs Charlton pointed out that there were other, more attractive, picnic areas in the town that people could be directed to with good signage. She felt that the main problem in turning the picnic area into a car park would be cost. However, she would welcome a reduction of hours in the long stay car park. She said that the lorry park did not benefit the town as it is used at night, and asked if it was necessary, especially as there is an alternative lorry park at Avon Country Park, 5 minutes down the road.

Cllr Wright was in favour of a reduction of hours but said that it would have to be well policed in order to be effective.

Cllr Wood, as a user of the long-stay car park, would support a reduction to 8 hours. She also asked if lorries could be restricted from using the lorry park before 6pm.

Cllr Mrs Sullivan said that people of the town are concerned about ecology and therefore the proposal to use the Rotary picnic area would be very controversial. She was also concerned about cars parking in side roads.

Cllr Clarke cautioned against having a knee-jerk reaction to a minority group of people using the car park. He said that it is a common facility for all to use and so many different people use it as Ringwood is a natural focal point. He also said that the loss of open space is a major issue in planning terms and added that the economics of turning the picnic area into a car park would undoubtedly be prohibitive.

Cllr Thierry suggested that the lorry park could be re-marked for cars in order to maximise the use of this space.

Cllr Mrs Charlton proposed that the District Council be requested to evaluate the use of the Rotary picnic area to alleviate car parking problems in the town. This was seconded by Cllr Wood. However, there was no support for the proposal.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the District Council be requested to reduce the permitted parking hours in the long stay car park to 8 hours.
- 2) That the District Council be requested to look at re-marking the lorry park for cars, in order to maximise the use of this space.
- 3) That the Town Clerk establish the status of the lorry park.

Cllr Thierry declared the meeting closed at 8.45pm.