

OPEN SESSION: There were 2 members of the public present who did not wish to speak.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Wednesday 22nd December 2004 at 7.00pm

PRESENT: Cllr M H Thierry (Town Mayor)
Cllr P Chambers
Cllr N J Chard
Cllr Mrs B A Charlton
Cllr N R G Clarke
Cllr C Ford
Cllr W S Rippon-Swaine
Cllr B H Terry
Cllr N Wood

IN ATTENDANCE: Terry Simpson, Town Clerk
Jo Stannard, Deputy Town Clerk

C/4329 ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr D E Cracknell, Cllr N W Light, Cllr Mrs B Wright and Cllr S Wright.

C/4330 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

C/4331 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 24th November 2004 be approved as a correct record and signed.

C/4332 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Christmas Lights

The Mayor announced that this year the Council had intended to spend five times as much on Christmas lights as it did last year and, with the Chamber of Trade & Commerce contributing £2,500, the town should have had a marvellous display. However, regrettably, despite every effort being made, the contractor had failed to deliver. He said that next year the Council would be purchasing the lights in liaison with the Chamber. In addition, as a completely separate exercise the Council would arrange for the erection of the lights, either through its own staff or a contractor. Subject to a contribution of £2,500 from the Chamber, there would be a total provision of £7,500 for lights in 2005.

Ringwood Junior School Governing Body

RESOLVED: That Cllr Thierry be elected to serve on the Governing Body of Ringwood Junior School for the remainder of his period of office on the Town Council.

C/4333

QUESTIONS OF THE MAYOR

Cllr Chard: asked if the Mayor was aware that the Government Planning Inspector had recommended the deletion of the reserve employment site at Lynes Farm from the Local Plan, and recommended land west of Crow Lane be considered as an additional reserve site for housing and employment. He was concerned that, without a distributor road from the A31 to the B3347, this would be a formula for disaster and the whole town would become gridlocked.

It was noted that the Planning, Town & Environment Committee had made a recommendation to Council on this matter and therefore agreed that this be discussed when those minutes were presented, under agenda item 8.

C/4334

REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

County Councillor

County Councillor John Waddington had given his apologies for the meeting, but sent the following report:

Hampshire County Council rated Excellent for third year - This annual assessment by the Audit Commission examines the way the County Council is run and the performance of the Council's main services. The County Council's score of 4 out of 4 in both sections maintains its position in the top 25% of authorities in the country for excellence.

The Audit Commission praised Hampshire County Council for "identifying what it wants to achieve including challenging targets and ambitions" and added "based on its current plans the Council is well placed to further improve the way it works and the services it provides."

Ringwood Health Walks - These will be launched at Cornerways Medical Centre on Wednesday 19th January 2005 at 12 noon.

Bickerley Green Elderly Persons Home - Work has now begun on extending Bickerley Green to include 29 nursing care beds, which will benefit elderly residents of this area.

District Councillors

Cllr Ford reported that the District Council would be introducing a garden waste collection in Ringwood in March 2005. Household holders would be able to purchase a heavy duty green bag for £25 for a one year licence. Bags would be collected fortnightly and the contents taken to be composted. Cllr Thierry added that the District Council was the third best council in the country for recycling and currently recycled 26% of its waste. This new scheme would help increase this percentage towards the government target of 40%. It was also noted that the scheme would not affect Council tax.

Cllr Heron reported that the proposed modifications to the Local Plan had been considered by a joint meeting of the Economy & Planning Review Panel and the Planning Development Control Committee. This joint panel had agreed recommendations to put forward to Cabinet on 5th January 2005. He said that the panel had been minded to accept most of the Inspector's recommendations, with the exception of his recommendation that the distance where higher housing densities should be sought close to town centres be extended from 100m to 400m.

C/4335**DISABLED PARKING IN FURLONG SHORT STAY CAR PARK**

The Mayor reported that, when resurfacing the Furlong Short Stay Car Park in January, the District Council had intended to implement a disabled parking provision of 31 spaces. This came as a result of a Cabinet decision to adopt Department of Transport guidelines that 5% of all parking spaces provided should be reserved for the exclusive use of disabled people. However, following a meeting with District Councillors and John Bull, Parking Manager for the District Council, the plan had been revised to provide a total of 18 disabled spaces, inclusive of the 8 spaces already in existence. This would mean a loss of 19 standard spaces in the Furlong Short Stay Car Park.

It was noted that neither the District Council nor the Town Council had received any requests for additional disabled parking spaces. In addition, members who used the existing spaces had never encountered any problems in finding a space.

Members recognised that there was a need to provide disabled spaces but felt that additional spaces should be created on the basis of need.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the Council supports the general principle of meeting the needs of disabled people, in terms of provision of parking spaces.
- 2) That the District Council be recommended to move towards the national guidelines, but that spaces be implemented in phases based on need identified by an annual review.
- 3) That the District Council be recommended to implement a total of 11 spaces in January 2005 as marked on the attached plan (*Annex 'A'*).

C/4336**RECREATION, LEISURE & OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE**

Cllr Chard presented the minutes of the Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 1st December 2004.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 1st December 2004, including the recommendations contained therein, be approved and adopted.

C/4337**PLANNING, TOWN & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

Cllr Clarke presented the minutes of the Planning, Town & Environment Committee meeting held on 10th December 2004.

P/4135: Cllr Clarke acknowledged comments made by Cllr Chard at C/4333 but said that the opinion of the Committee had been that it would be better to look at issues relating to employment and housing through the development of the Town Plan and Local Development Framework.

Cllr Rippon-Swaine felt that the Inspector's recommendations were just the tip of the iceberg as a consequence of the creation of the National Park. He suggested that the Council's interests would be best met through influencing development as much as possible, rather than resisting it wholesale.

It was also noted that there would be a period of public consultation on the proposed modifications to the Local Plan before final changes were made. It was therefore agreed to

approve the Committee's recommendation that no comments be made on the Inspector's Report at this stage.

P/4137: Cllr Clarke reported that a letter had been sent to the Director of Community Services at the District Council seeking his opinion on alcohol free zones. Cllr Thierry did not perceive drinking in the town to be a problem and did not feel that this solution would be appropriate. The Town Clerk said that no decision had been made to proceed with such a scheme and that this matter would be considered again when further information had been received.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning, Town & Environment Committee meeting held on 10th December 2004, including the recommendations contained therein, be approved and adopted.

**C/4338
POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Cllr Chard presented the minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee meeting held on 15th December 2004.

F/3718: With regard to the budget for Christmas lights, Cllr Chard asked that the following sentence be deleted from this minute: "*This would be in addition to the base budget of £1150.*"

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee meeting held on 15th December 2004, with the exception of Minute F/3719 which was to be considered next on the Agenda and with the change at F/3718 as outlined above, be approved and adopted.

**C/4339
COUNCIL PRECEPT 2005/06**

Cllr Chard, Chairman of the Policy & Finance Committee, presented the Committee's recommendations for the Council's budget and the precept for 2005/06 (*report attached as Annex 'B'*).

All members joined the Mayor in thanking the Town Clerk and the Finance Officer for all their work in the preparation of the budget and said that this work was much appreciated.

Cllr Chard wished to give his personal thanks to the Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk and the Finance Officer for their help and to all members of his committee for their support during this period of budget setting.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the recommendations of the Policy & Finance Committee relating to the Council budget, at minute F/3719 of the meeting held on 15th December 2004, be approved; and
- 2) That the Council's precept for 2005/06 be set at £254,650.

**C/4340
FORTHCOMING MEETINGS**

January 2005 (* **Note change of date for Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee.**)

Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces	7.00pm	Wednesday 5th January *
Planning, Town & Environment	2.05pm	Friday 7 th January
Policy & Finance	7.00pm	Wednesday 19 th January
Full Council	7.00pm	Wednesday 26 th January

It was also noted that the proposed date for Full Council in February would need to be moved as it coincided with the District Council's budget setting meeting.

The Mayor reminded members of lunchtime drinks at the Council on Thursday 23rd December at 12 noon, and of the Christmas Eve festivities in the Market Place at 6pm.

He also wished all members a very Happy Christmas and thanked them for all they had done during the year.

It was further noted that the Town Council offices would be closed from the afternoon of 24th December until Tuesday 4th January 2005.

The Mayor declared the meeting closed at 8.15pm.