

OPEN SESSION: There were no members of public present.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Wednesday 28th July 2004 at 7.00pm

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

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

C/4268 ABSENCE

All members were present.

C/4269 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

C/4270 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Meeting held on 23rd June 2004, having been circulated, be approved and signed as a correct record.

C/4271 COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED

The Mayor reported that the following letters had been received:

- i) Letter from U-Nite thanking the Council for its grant of £100.
- ii) Letter from Avon Valley Concerts Society thanking the Council for its grant of £250.
- iii) Letter from Bradford on Avon Town Council thanking the Council for the hospitality given to their French Twinning group during their walk from Sully sur Loire to Bradford on Avon.

The Mayor also extended many congratulations to all members who had been involved in the organisation of this year's Festival. He said that it was a great community event that would not have happened if it weren't for the dedication and hard work of members of the Steering Committee.

QUESTIONS OF THE MAYOR

Cllr Terry: asked the Mayor why he had chosen to speak against the New Forest Owl Sanctuary planning application, when the Town Council had supported it and District Council officers had recommended permission. Cllr Thierry replied that other District Councillors had been unhappy with the application as issues in the enforcement notices had not been addressed, and there was concern that they would not be addressed. He had had representations from people living in the area and had chosen to support them. Cllr Thierry went on to say that there were occasions on which Members were asked to represent people in a way that may conflict with their personal opinion. He said it was a councillor's responsibility to represent the people.

Cllr Mrs Charlton: asked the Mayor if he felt that his views represented the majority of the people of Ringwood. Cllr Thierry replied that if he was asked to represent people's views, then he would.

Cllr Chard: said that when he had been asked to make representations in the past with which he did not agree, he had always stated that this was not his personal view. He asked the Mayor if he had said this. Cllr Thierry said that he had not.

Cllr Clarke: asked the Mayor if, in the event of an appeal, he would be sustaining his objection to the application? Cllr Thierry replied that if the majority of people asked him to speak in favour of the application, then he would do so.

Cllr Mrs Sullivan: asked the Mayor what his views were on the closure of the Post Office and asked if there was anything that the Town Council could do. Cllr Thierry replied that the Town Council did recognise the severity of the impact the closure of the Post Office would have on the town. He said that he had personally spoken to both Morrisons and the Post Office to find out the current situation. He reported that the current agreement between the two would conclude in the Spring of 2005. In the meantime, the Post Office would be inviting tenders from businesses in the town to house the Post Office. If no tenders were forthcoming, the Post Office would not open a shop purely as a Post Office.

Cllr Wright: asked the Mayor if he was concerned that, if the Post Office did close, the stress on the car park at Poulner One Stop would become intolerable. Cllr Thierry replied that he was concerned about this.

Cllr Rippon-Swaine: asked the Mayor to reaffirm the principle for the Town Council. He was concerned that recent press on the deliberation of the Health Centre planning application had portrayed an image that 100% attention had been given to the use but 0% to the actual structure. He agreed that the Council should be an investor in people, but said that it should also be a custodian on the environment. He added that new developments in the town should enhance the centuries of architecture already in existence. Cllr Thierry re-affirmed that the Council was as equally concerned with structures as it was with needs of the people.

Cllr Ford: had been asked by a resident what facilities there were for baby-changing in the Ringwood toilets, especially for men wishing to use such facilities. Cllr Thierry replied that the policy for new-build toilets was to include baby-changing facilities either as part of the ladies toilets or in the disabled toilets. He had not come across any facilities in gents' toilets and said that this was probably due to space restrictions.

Cllr Cracknell: asked the Mayor if he was aware of the disgusting state of the toilets in Ringwood. Cllr Thierry replied that he was aware. He said that these toilets had always been problematic, although they were regularly cleaned. He reported that the Ringwood toilets were due for refurbishment, after Milford on Sea and Fordingbridge.

Cllr Light: asked the Mayor why the District Council could not use sweet smelling disinfectant in the toilets. Cllr Thierry replied that, due to Health and Safety regulations, operatives were unable to use such chemicals.

C/4273

REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

County Councillor

County Councillor John Waddington had given his apologies for the meeting. However, he had submitted a short report stating that the Ringwood Junior School rugby project was awaiting developments, the easement across The Castleman Trail had been satisfactorily resolved and work continued on the Cycling & Walking project, the Healthy Walks project and the Quomp highway issues.

District Councillors

Cllr Heron had given his apologies for the meeting.

Cllr Cracknell reported that car parking charges were to be increased.

Cllr Ford reported that the clear sack scheme had now been launched and the bags were being distributed to all households.

C/4274

TOWN COUNCIL ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2004

Members considered the recommendation from Policy & Finance Committee to approve the Town Council accounts for year ending 31st March 2004 (F/3652 refers).

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the unaudited accounts for the year ended 31st March 2004 be approved.
- 2) That the Statement of Accounts (as part of the Annual Return) be approved.
- 3) That the Statement of Assurance (as part of the Annual Return) be approved.

C/4275

PLANNING, TOWN & ENVIRONMENT

Cllr Clarke presented the minutes of the Planning, Town & Environment Committee meetings held on 25th June and 23rd July 2004.

He drew members' attention to P/4084 – Informal Transport Liaison Meeting – and hoped that the items put forward for this agenda represented the views of all members.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning, Town & Environment Committee meetings held on 25th June and 23rd July 2004 be approved and adopted.

C/4276

RECREATION, LEISURE & OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE

Cllr Light presented the minutes of the Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 14th July 2004.

OS/4526: Cllr Clarke said that he was impressed by the thoroughness of the Recreation Strategy report and hoped that, in conjunction with the Town Plan, this would lay the foundations of a new future for the town.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 14th July 2004 be approved and adopted.

C/4277

POLICY & FINANCE

Cllr Chard presented the minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee meeting held on 21st July 2004.

F/3652: Cllr Chard wished to congratulate all staff who had been involved in the preparation of the accounts for the year ended 31st March 2004.

Cllr Cracknell wished to comment on the minutes of the Festival Steering Committee that had taken place on 26th July. He said that the Festival had made a profit of somewhere in the region of £3,000. However, the total raised for charity had been in excess of £6,000.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee meeting held on 21st July 2004 be approved and adopted.

C/4278

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

August/September 2004

Planning, Town & Environment	2.05pm	Friday 20 th August
Full Council (Special Meeting)	7.00pm	Wednesday 1 st September
Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces	6.00pm	Wednesday 8 th September
Planning, Town & Environment	2.05pm	Friday 17 th September
Policy & Finance	7.00pm	Wednesday 22 nd September
Full Council	7.00pm	Wednesday 29 th September

It was noted that the Special Full Council meeting on 1st September had been called to discuss the proposed changes to the District of New Forest (Off-Street Parking Places) Order.

The Mayor declared the meeting closed at 7.35pm.