

OPEN SESSION: There were several members of the public present, but none who wished to speak.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Wednesday 27th April 2005 at 7.00pm

PRESENT: Cllr M H Thierry (Town Mayor)
Cllr P Chambers
Cllr Mrs B A Charlton
Cllr D R Cole
Cllr D E Cracknell
Cllr C Ford
Cllr N W Light
Cllr Mrs V A Sullivan
Cllr B H Terry
Cllr N Wood

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

C/4382 ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr N J Chard, Cllr N R G Clarke and Cllr W S Rippon-Swaine.

C/4383 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

C/4384 PRESENTATION TO JOHN WADDINGTON

The Mayor thanked John Waddington for all the work he had undertaken on behalf of the town during his periods of office with the Town, District and County Councils over the past 32 years, and presented him with a painting of scenes of Ringwood.

Mr Waddington replied that it was the end of an era but that he felt it was the right time to move on and make way for other people. He believed that the reorganisation of local government was not far away and said that town and parish councils would assume more responsibility in future and have a greater influence on the life of the town. He thanked members of the Town Council and wished them well in the future.

C/4385 PRESENTATION OF GRANT AID CHEQUE

The Deputy Mayor presented a grant aid cheque for £300 to Victim Support – New Forest & Romsey towards the cost of recruiting a new volunteer for Ringwood.

C/4386 PRESENTATION BY STEVE PEGLER, HAMPSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Mr Steve Pegler introduced himself as the Group Manager for the New Forest North group of Hampshire Fire & Rescue Service (HFRS), with a responsibility for delivering the fire service response and community fire safety. He explained that HFRS had reorganised over the last

year and had now split into 10 groups. The New Forest North group included Totton, Lyndhurst, Burley, Ringwood and Fordingbridge. The focus of the groups was to raise awareness in the community and promote good practice, in an attempt to prevent fires before they happen.

The Mayor asked if there were any plans to cut back the Fire Service presence in Ringwood. Mr Pegler replied that, as a public body, the Fire Service was continuously looking at its performance and reviewing the service. Inevitably, this would result in changes over the years. However, at present there was no indication of any proposed change in resources in Ringwood.

Cllr Mrs Sullivan asked if the Ringwood station was equipped to deal with road traffic accidents (RTAs). Mr Pegler replied that the station had two appliances, one of which carried predominantly rescue equipment, which was sufficient to deal with normal RTAs.

The Mayor thanked Mr Pegler for his presentation.

C/4387 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd March 2005, having been circulated, be approved and signed as a correct record.

C/4388 CO-OPTION TO FILL VACANCY IN EAST WARD

The Mayor reported that five electors had put their names forward for consideration, and explained the election process to members.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That Mr Malcolm Daly, Mr L F Knott, Mr Jim Clegg, Mr Richard Grant and Ms Anne Murphy be approved for election.
- 2) That the vote be undertaken by secret ballot.

Mr Daly and Mr Knott were in attendance and both gave brief presentations to members.

It was noted that Mr Daly was Treasurer of the Ringwood Conservative Club. Therefore, Cllrs Thierry and Mrs Ford declared personal but not prejudicial interests, as they were both members of the Club.

There was no overall majority after the first vote and Ms Murphy, having the lowest number of votes, was excluded from the next vote.

There was no overall majority after the second vote and Mr Grant and Mr Knott, having the equal lowest number of votes, were excluded from the next vote.

RESOLVED: That Mr Daly, having the majority of votes, be elected as a member of Ringwood Town Council for the East Ward. Mr Daly duly read and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

C/4389 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor announced that Trafalgar Weekend would take place from 21st to 23rd October this year, in commemoration of the bicentenary of the Battle of Trafalgar. It was noted that the Council had received a guide to taking part, in the event that any councillor was interested in becoming involved.

C/4390

QUESTIONS OF THE MAYOR

Cllr Mrs Sullivan asked why the notice for the Annual Assembly included the statement that “all electors were welcome to attend”. The Mayor replied that residents whose names appeared on the electoral role were permitted to attend. However, no one who wished to attend would be excluded. Cllr Mrs Sullivan was also concerned that there was no disabled access to the council chamber in the Public Offices where the Full Council meetings were held. She asked if there would be any change in this situation. The Town Clerk replied that, under the Disability Discrimination Act, there was a statutory requirement to provide facilities for the disabled, providing this could be done at reasonable cost. He was sure that the District Council, as owner of the building, had assessed this. However, he said that the Town Council may wish to consider moving its meetings elsewhere.

Cllr Cracknell wished to congratulate the Chamber of Trade on the organisation of the French Market the previous weekend. He added that the market worked well with the stalls turned in to the pavement. The Mayor agreed with Cllr Cracknell and said that the Charter Market would be even better if the market vehicles were stopped from parking in the Market Place all day.

C/4391

REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

There was no report from County Councillor John Waddington.

New Forest District Councillors

Cllr Ford reported that the Environment Review Panel and Crime and Disorder Review Panel, both of which she was a member, were focussing on the following issues at present:

- Flytipping – the District Council was now responsible for prosecutions.
- Recycling and Waste
- New rules and regulations governing cemeteries
- Community Safety Officers – had been perceived to be a success, but there were too few. Their success would be compared to that of CCTV.
- Road Safety – looking at speed and the number of deaths in the district.

Cllr Dr Whitehead reported that the Housing, Health and Social Inclusion Panel was currently looking at the White Paper on Public Health and the Community Hospital Strategy.

Cllr Heron reported that Cllr Pemberton had been elected as the Chairman of the District Council and Cllr Scott would be Vice Chairman for the forthcoming year.

Cllr Thierry reported the following:

- The garden waste collection scheme was to be extended throughout the district.
- He had asked officers to approach the County Council regarding devolving powers to District and Town Councils, giving them the ability to deal with irregular posters.
- He had asked officers to bring the Ringwood toilets forward in the capital programme for rebuild.

C/4392

CAR PARKING PROBLEMS IN THE TOWN

With the agreement of members, Standing Orders were suspended to allow District Councillor Heron to take part in the following discussion.

The Mayor suggested that the District Council had no appreciation for the size of the problem of car parking in the town, nor the urgency for the requirement to do something about it. He asked Cllr Heron what the Council intended to do to alleviate the situation.

Cllr Heron replied that the problem had been caused by the development of vacant land formerly used for car parking, such as at the rear of The Crown, and by the number of companies and individuals using the town as a base for car sharing or transport on to other places. The District Council believed that it should encourage these environmentally friendly methods of travel but did not believe that it was responsible for bearing the cost of this. An informal approach had been made to strategic authorities to assist with the problem and it had been agreed to meet with representatives of Hampshire County Council after the forthcoming election. He added that other towns throughout the district had similar problems. However, he believed Ringwood to be fortunate, in that there was a possibility of funding due to its strategic location on the A31.

Cllr Cracknell remained convinced that decked parking would work and encouraged the District Council to continue to pursue this possibility.

Cllr Mrs Charlton asked that the proposal to reduce the maximum stay in the long-stay car park to 8 hours be looked at again. She said that members of the Chamber of Trade had been consulted again on this matter, and would be in support of a reduction in hours. She also asked whether Waitrose could be approached for a contribution towards decked parking, as the increase in the size of the store and the resultant loss of car parking was partly responsible for the current situation.

The Town Clerk reminded members that, following a special meeting on 1st September 2004, the Council had requested that the District Council complete as quickly as possible the investigations into the financial and parking management implications of providing reserved parking spaces for use by local businesses and look at a more market related charging regime for long stay car parking. Despite repeated requests for a response to these requests, the District Council had not responded to either issue.

RESOLVED: That this information be noted.

Standing Orders were re-instated.

C/4393

PROPOSED CHANGES TO BUS SERVICES

The Town Clerk reported that Wilts & Dorset had proposed to reduce the 136/137 bus service in the town from running every 20 minutes to every 2 hours. He was pleased to report that Hampshire County Council had intervened and agreed to subsidise the service and that the only change would be the loss of the 6.50am service. The future of the service would be considered again in April 2006 when the County Council reviews and re-tenders its subsidised bus routes in the New Forest area.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That this information be noted.
- 2) That a press release be issued.

**C/4394
PLANNING, TOWN & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

Cllr Terry presented the minutes of the Planning, Town & Environment Committee meeting held on 1st April 2005.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning, Town & Environment Committee meeting held on 1st April 2005, be approved and adopted.

**C/4395
RECREATION, LEISURE & OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE**

Cllr Light presented the minutes of the Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 6th April 2005.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 6th April 2005, and the recommendation contained therein, be approved and adopted.

**C/4396
POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Cllr Chambers presented the minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee meeting held on 20th April 2005.

F/3763(ii): It was noted that Cllr Mrs Charlton would be attending the HAPTC event on 'How a Parish Plan Influences' on 20th May 2005. The Town Clerk asked if any other member wished to attend, to let him know without delay.

F/3764: The Town Clerk asked members to let him know if they wished to attend the reception for the Director of HAPTC on 10th June 2005.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee meeting held on 20th April 2005, and the recommendations contained therein, be approved and adopted.
- 2) That Cllr Daly become a member of the Christmas Lights Working Party, together with Cllrs Chard and Cracknell.

**C/4397
FORTHCOMING MEETINGS**

May 2005

Planning, Town & Environment	2.05pm	Friday 29 th April
Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces	7.00pm	Wednesday 4 th May
ANNUAL TOWN ASSEMBLY	7.30pm	Wednesday 11 th May
Policy & Finance	7.00pm	Wednesday 18 th May
ANNUAL MEETING	7.00pm	Wednesday 25 th May
Planning, Town & Environment	2.05pm	Friday 27 th May

**C/4398
EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

RESOLVED: That under section 100 (A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information. (Annex 'A').

C/4399

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AT RINGWOOD JUNIOR SCHOOL

The Mayor referred to the notes of the informal meeting with the Rugby Club the previous evening. He noted that the use of Developers' Contributions for the scheme would be discussed at the Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee in May and asked the Chairman of the Committee to allow members to consider at that meeting an alternative management arrangement that would ensure additional benefits for the town. The Chairman confirmed that the suggestion made by the Mayor would be debated at the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Recreation, Leisure and Open Spaces Committee look at all the options at its Meeting in May and make a recommendation back to Full Council.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.55pm.