

OPEN SESSION: There were four members of public present, one of whom wished to speak to the Council (see attached notes).

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Wednesday 19th December 2007 at 7.02pm

Apologies

The Town Clerk reported that apologies for absence had been received from Cllr D E Cracknell and Cllr M F J Daly.

Declarations of Interest

There were none.

PRESENT: Cllr B H Terry (Town Mayor)
Cllr P Chambers
Cllr N J Chard
Cllr N R G Clarke
Cllr D R Cole
Cllr L C Ford
Cllr J D Heron
Cllr W S Rippon-Swaine
Cllr Mrs J Terry
Cllr M Steele
Cllr M J Urwin
Cllr A C Wiseman

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr T Simpson, Town Clerk
Mrs J Stannard, Deputy Town Clerk

C/4776

PRESENTATION OF CHEQUE

Due to illness, it was not possible to present the grant aid cheque to Forest Forge Theatre Company, and it was agreed to defer the presentation until the January 2008 meeting.

C/4777

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

C/4770: Cllr Mrs Wiseman felt that there had been an omission from this minute, as there was no reference to the fact that she had been criticised by the Mayor for giving incorrect information in her letter to the press, or to the cost of the District Council's consultants.

The Town Clerk explained that minutes were not intended to be a verbatim expose of a meeting and should be brief and to the point, particularly when there was no decision to be taken on a matter, which was the case for this particular minute.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 28th November 2007, having been circulated, be approved and signed as a correct record.

C/4778

RECREATION, LEISURE & OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE

Cllr Chard presented the minutes of the Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 5th December 2007.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 5th December 2007 be received.

C/4779

PLANNING, TOWN & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Cllr Clarke presented the minutes of the Planning, Town & Environment Committee meeting held on 7th December 2007.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning, Town & Environment Committee meeting held on 7th December 2007 be received and the recommendation therein be approved.

C/4780

POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Cllr Heron presented the minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee meeting held on 12th December 2007.

F/4199: Cllr Ford reported that all District Councillors had signed a letter of objection to Hampshire County Council and Wilts and Dorset Bus Company regarding the proposed reduction in local bus services.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee meeting held on 12th December 2007, with the exception of F/4203, be received.

C/4781

COUNCIL BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2008/09

Members considered the recommendation F/4203 from Policy & Finance Committee, which outlined the Council's budget and precept for 2008/09. It was noted that the budget provided for an increase of £5.34 per year in the amount payable by a householder in a band D property. This would mean that, in 2008/09, Council tax payers in band D properties in Ringwood would be paying £64.66 per annum for Town Council services.

Cllr Chambers was concerned that the full cost of extending the road in the Cemetery was being met from the general reserve and felt that this would reduce the reserves to an unacceptable level. He therefore recommended that the precept should be increased in order to maintain the level of reserves at £150,000. However, it was noted that this represented a worse case scenario and, if the work was not completed by the end of the 2008/09 financial year, the full draw down from reserves may not then be necessary. In light of this, it would be necessary to look at making future revenue contributions to a capital fund and a report would be presented for consideration by Members at the January meeting of the Policy & Finance Committee.

Cllr Chard was concerned about the new bid for Mayoral regalia. He said that the Council had agreed that the position of Mayor would be at no cost to the tax payer and felt that this item may be misconstrued by the public. It was noted that this was a nominal amount to enable the Mayor to wear the chain of office outside the town and to provide a pendant for the Mayor's escort. It was therefore agreed to amend the wording of this item to "pendant and ribbon".

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the recommendations of the Policy & Finance Committee relating to the Council budget, at minute F/4203 of the meeting held on 12th December 2007, which provides for an overall net budget of £393,750 and a transfer from the general reserve of £43,670 be approved; and
- 2) That the Council's precept for 2008/09 be set at £350,080.

C/4782

COMMUNICATIONS TO BE RECEIVED

The Town Mayor reported that the District Auditor had now completed his audit of the Council's accounts, which had been signed off without comment. A formal report would be submitted to the Policy & Finance Committee in January 2008.

C/4783

REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

District Councillor Ford presented her written report (*Annex 'A'*). She said that she would be speaking at the Cabinet meeting on 2nd January 2008 to give reservations on Option 1 as a consequence of results of the public consultation and correspondence received. She felt that the people of the town should decide what they wanted for their town, and the decision should not be made purely on the advice of consultants.

The Mayor reported that he would also be attending the Cabinet meeting to speak on behalf of the Town Council.

District Councillor Rippon-Swaine, a member of the Town Centre Steering Group, said that the majority of people who had responded to the consultation had voted for something in the town and the Steering Group had supported this, although it had specifically excluded Option 1 from its recommendation to Cabinet.

County Councillor Clarke presented his written report (*Annex 'B'*).

Cllr Heron noted that the County Council had funded a review of options for a bypass around Lyndhurst, but that it was not prepared to look at other towns in the area in need relief road, such as Ringwood.

District Councillor Treleaven had sent his apologies for the meeting, but he had submitted a written report, which was circulated for information (*Annex 'C'*).

C/4784

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces	7.00pm	Wednesday 9 th January
Planning, Town & Environment	2.00pm	Friday 11 th January
Town Plan Co-ordinating		Monday 14 th January
Policy & Finance	7.00 pm	Wednesday 23 rd January
Council	7.00 pm	Wednesday 30 th January

There being no further business, the Town Mayor closed the meeting at 7.45pm.