

OPEN SESSION: There were three members of public present. Mr Norman Light offered Bisterne Village Hall as a location for the proposed noticeboard to keep residents in the outlying areas informed of Council business.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Wednesday 28th November 2007 at 7.03pm

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
District Councillor C Treleven
Rachel Giles, Student Adviser

C/4764

PRESENTATION OF CHEQUES

The Town Mayor presented a grant aid cheque of £350 to representatives of the Bisterne Village Hall Committee, as a contribution towards fire safety and refurbishment costs.

C/4765

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 21st November 2007, having been circulated, be approved and signed as a correct record.

C/4766

RECREATION, LEISURE & OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE

Cllr Chard presented the minutes of the Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 7th November 2007.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 7th November 2007 be received.

C/4767

PLANNING, TOWN & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Cllr Steele presented the minutes of the Planning, Town & Environment Committee meeting held on 9th November 2007.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning, Town & Environment Committee meeting held on 9th November 2007 be received and the recommendation therein be approved.

C/4768

TOWN PLAN COORDINATING

Cllr Terry presented the minutes of the Town Plan Coordinating Committee meeting held on 19th November 2007.

T/0092: Cllr Mrs Wiseman asked if all households would receive a copy of the Draft Town Plan. It was noted that the method of distribution was yet to be determined by the Committee, but the fact that not all households received copies of local free newspapers would be taken into consideration, as would the cost and feasibility of alternative options such as the use of an agency or Post Office.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Town Plan Coordinating Committee meeting held on 19th November 2007 be received.

C/4769

POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Cllr Heron presented the minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee meeting held on 21st November 2007.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee meeting held on 21st November 2007 be received.

C/4770

RINGWOOD TOWN CENTRE STEERING GROUP

The Town Mayor, as the Council's representative, had attended the Ringwood Town Centre Steering Group meeting held on 15th November. He reported that between 40 and 50 members of the public had been present, the majority of whom were in favour of no development on the south west corner of the Furlong Car Park. He was concerned that the breakdown of responses to the public consultation implied that the majority of residents did not care about the viability of the town and did not want to see a vibrant town centre. However, this was not a view that had been echoed in the responses to the Town Council's consultation on the Town Plan.

Cllr Rippon-Swaine, a member of the Steering Group, was offended that the Group had been accused of not taking account of the democratic process of consultation. He referred to the 2000 replies that had been received in response to consultation on the Town Plan, of which 78% were in favour of doing something in the town. He said that the Steering Group had agreed to pursue the sort of development that the majority of the people in the town who responded to both consultations wanted. In addition, Option 1 had been specifically excluded. He was therefore disappointed with the way the meeting had been reported in the local press.

Cllr Heron had also been offended by a letter in the local press that suggested councillors had a vested interest. He said that councillors were answerable to the public and were only interested in the good and future of the town.

Cllr Wiseman was concerned that not all households had received the consultation document. She also referred to the fact that 1300 of the 2000 responses to the Town Plan consultation had been received from school children and did not believe that these should carry the same weight of adult Council Tax payers.

The Town Clerk commented that a member of the Town Plan Partnership Steering Group had personally delivered 2000 questionnaires on the Town Plan consultation and even in those areas people had still denied receipt. He also reported that the Chamber of Trade, an organisation that knows about the viability of the town, was disappointed that the press had not referred to its comments made at the Steering Group meeting.

RESOLVED: That the outcome of the Ringwood Town Centre Steering Group meeting held on 15th November 2007 be noted.

C/4771

COMMUNICATIONS TO BE RECEIVED

The Town Mayor made the following announcements:

- 1) Although it had been announced that both of the Post Offices within Ringwood were to be retained, it had come to his attention that the Post Office has been reluctant to issue any detailed financial or usage data which might justify its decisions to close certain other offices. He therefore proposed to submit a comment on behalf of the Town Council that the Post Office should be more open with information at its disposal and make this available for local Councils to enable them to come to a logical reasoned decision on the Post Office's proposals.
- 2) Funding of up to £10,000 had been secured from Hampshire County Council in order to proceed with the scheme to install street lights alongside the footpath which crosses Carvers Recreation Ground. Implementation of this scheme would help to address crime and disorder issues and improve the safety of pedestrians using the footpath. This route had also been included in the Walking and Cycling Master Plan for the town, and it was envisioned that it would become part of a safe walking and cycling route to the town centre and the southern part of the town. It was expected that work would commence early in the New Year.
- 3) The Council has been offered an original hand-coloured print entitled "Prospect of Ringwood - 14 June 1974" for £100. It was agreed to put an item on the agenda for the next Policy & Finance Committee to enable this offer to be considered.
- 4) He had obtained figures from New Forest District Council and reported that there were 1483 people on the housing register waiting for properties in the Ringwood area.

C/4772

REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

County Councillor Clarke presented his written report (*Annex 'A'*). He reported that Hampshire County Council made a £6.5 million subsidy to bus routes in the county. Bus companies had a 60 day right to give up routes if they were judged to be uneconomic. This was now the case with some local routes and Wilts & Dorset had given notice that they would be cutting back to the profitable core routes, which were supported by high volumes of passengers. Cllr Heron said that the County Council needed to look at new and innovative ways of delivering an effective public transport service. It was noted that this issue would be discussed at the Policy & Finance Committee meeting on 12th December 2007.

Cllr Heron asked if Lymington Hospital would be remaining as part of the NHS. There was some concern as part of the Out of Hours service was provided by the hospital and it was probable that Ringwood residents would be referred there. It was also noted that there were problems with accessibility and parking. It was noted that the local press had reported that it would remain part of the NHS.

District Councillor Ford presented her written report (*Annex 'B'*).

District Councillor Treleaven presented his written report (*Annex 'C'*).

C/4773

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces	7.00pm	Wednesday 5 th December
Planning, Town & Environment	2.00pm	Friday 7 th December
Policy & Finance	7.00 pm	Wednesday 12 th December
Council	7.00 pm	Wednesday 19 th December

C/4774

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED: That in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it was advisable in the public interest that the press and public be temporarily excluded and they were instructed to withdraw. (*Annex 'D'*)

C/4775

MOUNT PLEASANT LANE

Members considered the Council's position in respect of access over Mount Pleasant Lane.

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk be instructed to progress the matter in the manner determined at the meeting.

There being no further business, the Town Mayor closed the meeting at 8.30pm.