

OPEN SESSION: There were several members of public present.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Wednesday 30th September 2009 at 7.00pm

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr T Simpson, Town Clerk
Mrs J Stannard, Deputy Town Clerk
Mrs C Smith, Office Manager
District Cllr C Treleaven

Prior to the meeting, the Mayor extended a special welcome to Inspector Paul Langridge and Sergeant Rick Gallagher; new student advisors Simon, Nikky, Maisie and Cassie and judges and winners of the allotment competition.

C/4952 APOLOGIES

All members were present.

C/4953 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Ford indicated that she would declare a personal and prejudicial interest in minute F/4466 of the Policy & Finance Committee meeting held on 16th September if the matter was discussed.

C/4954 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Meeting held on 29th July 2009, having been circulated, be approved and signed as a correct record.

C/4955 ALLOTMENT COMPETITION 2009

The judging of the Allotment Competition had once again been carried out by members of Ringwood Gardening Club. The Club's Chairman, Mr Robin Attack, said that he had been a member of the judging team for the last three years and had seen a great improvement, which

was particularly noticeable in the last year. He reported that little had separated the top three plots at both sites and a second visit had been required to finalise the results.

The awards were presented by Cllr Terry, Chairman of the Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee as follows:

Southampton Road

1st Mr Robinson – plot SR1

2nd Mrs Brewer – plot SR2

Upper Kingston

1st Mr Adams – plot UK23

2nd Mrs Burrett – plot UK12

Overall Winner

Mr Adams – plot UK23

Runners Up received National Garden Vouchers for £20, Site Winners received vouchers to the value of £30 together with the site winner's trophy and the overall winner received vouchers to the value of £50 and the overall winner's trophy.

Cllr Terry thanked the members of the Gardening Club for their continued support in the judging of the competition.

C/4956

INSPECTOR PAUL LANGRIDGE

The Mayor welcomed Inspector Paul Langridge who had recently been appointed as Inspector, based in Ringwood and overseeing Ringwood, Fordingbridge and Lyndhurst. He gave Members a brief background to his career, which had included public protection, and stated that he would like to develop a close working relationship with the Town Council. He hoped he would be based in the town for 65% to 70% of his duties.

Cllr Woodfield raised the issue of the recent case in Leicestershire where the Police had stated that low level anti-social behaviour was the responsibility of the district council. Inspector Langridge was of the opinion that everyone should have a part to play in dealing with such issues, including the Police, other agencies and the local community.

In response to a question regarding Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs), which the Town Council supports financially, Sergeant Gallagher stated that he would be producing monthly reports on their activities within the town, beginning in October.

Cllr Heron stated that there had been significant investment in CCTV in the town. However, he was aware of one incident that may have been covered by CCTV where the investigating officer did not request footage for a considerable length of time. He was aware of another recent incident in the Furlong Centre and asked if the Police had made use of this valuable resource. Inspector Langridge gave assurances that CCTV images would be used if available. Sergeant Gallagher emphasised that the Police did make use of CCTV on a day to day basis.

The Town Clerk said that he had received a recent report from a member of the public of alleged activities taking place at Carvers, including an attempted break-in, a gunshot and aggravated sexual assault. He asked what the current position was with regard to Carvers. Sergeant Gallagher said that, in his opinion, the situation had been better in the past year than

it had ever been. With regard to this particular incident, he reported that the gunshot was in fact a firecracker and that there had been no evidence of any drug use, or of the other activities referred to, in the area.

Cllr O'Reilly was concerned about a recent spate of break-ins and antisocial behaviour in the Southampton Road area. Inspector Langridge said that there was an issue with resources and, on occasion, the Police presence in town was less than it should be. However, he was hoping to be able to address this in the near future.

C/4957

PLANNING, TOWN & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Cllr Clarke presented the minutes of the Planning, Town & Environment Committee meetings held on 14th August and 11th September 2009.

P/4688 - Cllr Chard felt that an opportunity had been missed to push for delivery of a distributor road to take traffic away from Eastfield Lane. However, it was noted that the subject could be discussed at the next meeting of the traffic management liaison meeting with the District Council. Cllr Rippon-Swaine reported that there were proposals to deploy a Speed Indicator Device (SID) in Eastfield Lane

P/4690 – Cllr Heron was concerned that the experimental one-way traffic order for Kings Arms Lane had been delayed because of the effect planned roadworks may have on the scheme. Although the scheme had now been advertised with a start date of 6th November, he was concerned about the effect of future road works.

P/4695 – Cllr Heron reported that Finn M'Couls had now been granted a variation of premises licence with conditions. It was noted that details would be sent to Members with the Weekly Bulletin.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning, Town & Environment Committee meetings held on 14th August and 11th September 2009 be received.

C/4958

RECREATION, LEISURE AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE

Cllr B Terry presented the minutes of the Recreation, Leisure and Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 2nd September 2009.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Recreation, Leisure and Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 2nd September 2009 be received and the recommendation at OS/5120 be approved.

C/4959

POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Cllr Heron presented the minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee meeting held on 16th September 2009.

F/4462 - Cllr Wiseman said that, although no direct grant had been made to the Football Club for at least six years, the Council had supported the Club in other ways by providing new goal posts and nets, a storage container and improvements to the car park. However, it was noted that these items were part of a commercial negotiation with the Club for a variation on its lease to enable the 10-acre field to be brought into use. It was agreed that a copy of the Club's lease would be circulated to Members for information.

Cllr Wiseman also queried the support by the Town Council of other sports and noted that the Lawn Tennis Club had closed as the Council had withdrawn funding. Cllr Heron stated that the Tennis Club had been heavily subsidised over a long period of time and had closed because it was no longer viable.

F/4466 - Cllr Ford declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item as a close colleague and friend of the person in question. She asked if all Members were aware of the action that had been agreed by the Policy & Finance Committee. The Town Clerk replied that all members, apart from any who declared a prejudicial interest, received copies of confidential minutes. Cllr Ford feared that the resolution would have a severe effect on the Town Council with regard to future publicity and advertising in the publication in question. She said that the alternative publication was not widely read by people in the town.

Cllr Ford left the room and Cllr Terry took the Chair.

The Town Clerk advised Members that, as this was an item of report, the only option available was to refer the matter back to Policy & Finance Committee for reconsideration. Cllr Heron, the Chairman of the Committee, reported that the decision had been taken unanimously by members of the Committee. Other Members of the Council indicated their support for the Committee's decision and it was therefore agreed that the item be not referred back.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee meeting held on 16th September 2009 be received.

Cllr Ford returned to the room and re-took the Chair.

C/4960

COMMUNITY FIRST NEW FOREST

It was noted that the Council had joined Community First New Forest in March 2009 but had not yet appointed a representative to attend meetings.

Cllr Clarke said that he would be pleased to represent the Council as he was currently Deputy Chairman of the organisation. It was noted that Cllr Rippon-Swaine was the County Council representative. In addition, Cllr Mrs Terry was interested in issues relating to the elderly and it was hoped that there may be an opportunity for her to be involved in this developing area.

RESOLVED: That Cllr Clarke be appointed as the Town Council's representative to attend meetings of Community First New Forest.

C/4961

COMMUNICATIONS TO BE RECEIVED

The Town Mayor reported on the following:

i) Hightown Road – Crossing

Following the unauthorised erection of the fence on Town Council land by Hampshire County Council to close off the informal access from Victoria Gardens onto Hightown Road, it had become clear that a previously unsatisfactory situation had become more dangerous as people had found a way around the fence and were now coming down a steep slope straight onto the road.

The preferred solution of continuing the strategic walking and cycling route from Quomp had now been safety audited and, providing changes to the road layout could lower traffic speeds, it would be possible to create a new safe crossing of Hightown Road between its junctions with Quomp and Kingsfield. The Town Council was pushing for this route to be delivered urgently and, providing the funding could be found, she understood that the changes to the road layout would be implemented on a trial basis first to meet the requirements of the safety audit. As an alternative, a second location for a crossing had been identified directly opposite Ringwood Junior School and it was hoped that the Safer Routes to Schools group at Hampshire County Council would be looking to deliver this, in addition to the strategic route.

The Town Mayor hoped that all councillors would press the District and County Councils to resolve this matter quickly.

ii) Student Advisor James Fullick

The Town Mayor read a letter of thanks from James Fullick. In it he thanked Members for their support, guidance and teaching throughout his time as a student advisor.

iii) Woofability

A letter of thanks had been received from Woofability for the £100 grant aid towards training an assistance dog for a disabled person in Ringwood.

iv) Ringwood Carnival

A letter thanking Councillors, staff, and especially the groundsmen, has been received from the Ringwood Carnival Committee. Over £4,500 was raised from the street collection, which would go to local charities and organisations.

On behalf of the Town Council, the Town Mayor congratulated the hard-working members of the Carnival Committee and all the dedicated volunteers involved for creating another enjoyable and highly successful event for the town.

v) Letter from Mayor of Pont-Audemer

A letter had been received from the Mayor of Pont-Audemer, Michel Leroux, stating that they were in favour of reviving the twinning arrangements between Ringwood and Pont-Audemer.

vi) Mayor's Cadet

All members were invited to attend an Open Evening at 7.30pm on Tuesday 13th October, when cadets would be presented with awards and there would be an opportunity to look around the facilities and see demonstrations of activities.

C/4962

REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

County Councillor Rippon-Swaine presented his written report (*Annex 'A'*).

District Councillor Treleaven presented his written report (*Annex 'B'*). With regard to the crossing of Hightown Road, he said that although the District Council has an agency agreement for traffic management, it was constrained by the overall policies of the County Council. However, he was aware that the situation was dangerous and Members were therefore keen to get the issue resolved in a speedy and timely manner.

District Councillor Heron – reported on the New Forest National Park Authority. The draft Management Plan would be published on 22 October and finalised on 10 December, the draft Core Strategy would be published on 3 December and a six week public consultation period would begin in January 2010 and the draft Recreation Plan would be published on 21 January and finalised on 25 February 2010. He also reported that the position of permanent Chief Executive had now been advertised and discussions were taking place regarding the possibility of the authority's headquarters being relocated to the Town Hall in Lymington.

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

Cllr Clarke reported on his attendance at the following meetings: New Forest Consultative Committee, New Forest Association of Local Councils, Community First Trustee Board – which would be advertising for Trustees with a background in charities with fund raising or marketing skills, Forest Forge and New Forest District Liaison meeting with Town and Parish Councils.

C/4963

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces	7.00pm	Wednesday 7 th October
Planning, Town & Environment	2.00pm	Friday 9 th October
Policy & Finance	7.00pm	Wednesday 21 st October
Full Council	7.00pm	Wednesday 28 th October

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