

## Minutes of the Meeting of Hythe and Dibden Parish Council

Held at The Grove, 25 St John's Street, Hythe  
on Wednesday 25 November 2015 at 7.00 p.m

p Cllr C Harrison (Chairman)  
a Cllr Mrs M McLean (Vice Chairman)

### Councillors:

p P Armstrong  
p J Binns  
p M Bovey  
p E Davey  
p Mrs J Fowler  
p T Johnson

### Councillors:

p G Parkes  
p D Poole  
p M Short  
p A Wade  
p M Wade

p = present

a = apologies

n = no apologies received

### In Attendance

p Cllr B Andrews (NFDC)  
a Cllr K Crisell (NFDC)

### Officers in attendance

Mrs S Bennett (Clerk to the Council)  
Mr S Spencer (Deputy Clerk to the Council)  
Mrs B Edwards (Minute Clerk)

2 Members of the Public

### 176/15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no declarations made or requests for dispensations

### 177/15 MINUTES

Consideration was given to the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 28 October 2015.

**RESOLVED**

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 28 October 2015 be signed by the Chairman as correct.

**178/15 PUBLIC FORUM**

There were no matters raised.

**179/15 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman informed Members that he had attended St John's Church to judge the annual Christmas Tree competition which began on 21 November 2015 and included a musical interlude and refreshments. The event finishes on 5 December with a closing concert. The Chairman encouraged Members to attend.

The Chairman attended a meeting of Hythe Hospital Stakeholders and Clinical Commissioning Group where it was announced the new hospital, which will be called Hythe and Dibden War Memorial Hospital, is on track for completion in 2017. The new build will cost £6 million, £2 million to equip and £547,000 per annum to run. It is possible that the facility may open 7 days per week from 8 a.m until 8 p.m however there are not as many services to run from the hospital as previously.

The Chairman has written to Chief Inspector Simon Tribe of Hampshire Police to thank him and his officers for the hard work undertaken regarding the terrible assault in Hythe and the ongoing work to tackle the behaviour of a group of young people who congregate in the village centre. The Chairman invited Chief Inspector Tribe to address a future Council meeting. Chief Inspector Tribe has agreed to attend on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2016. It was suggested that the meeting will be held at the Parish Hall, West Street, Hythe and that the rector John Currin be invited to present on Restorative Practice. In light of this being a long meeting members wished to look at moving Council to another date. The 13<sup>th</sup> January following planning was felt to be appropriate.

The Chairman asked members if they wished to join in the Christmas Tree Festival in 2016 and this was felt to be something members would like to consider.

**180/15 REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS**

Cllr. Malcolm Wade had previously submitted a written report. He read out a statement from Steve Crocker (Interim Director of Children's Services, Hampshire County Council (HCC), issued to the media in response to a media story with regards to a contentious case in the family courts:

“This is an exceptional case in that one of the original social workers, who is not named, was performing very poorly, and for unexplained reasons was painting an over-optimistic picture of extremely neglectful and dangerous care by the family of the children. She was removed from the case, and ultimately from the County Council’s employment. The new social workers were more direct and accurate in their assessments, and then in their applications to the courts. Unfortunately, through no fault of their own, they found themselves at the heart of a courtroom dispute about what should and should not be disclosed about the original benign assessments.

In our view, the Judge’s personal views are both unfair and disproportionate. Publicly naming the social workers has caused deep distress to staff involved and we are supporting them as best we can. Despite Judge Mark Horton’s personal comments and our frustration in his condemnation of the County Council’s social work practice, he ultimately agreed at the outcome that we, including the named social workers, wished to secure the approval of Care Orders to protect a family of very vulnerable children.

I am unable to go into any further detail as this point while we consider our position and whether we have sufficient grounds to submit a judicial complaint. I will provide a further update once we have taken further legal advice on the matter”.

A spokesperson for HCC said “We are pleased for the sake of the children that the courts have agreed our applications for Care Orders. This is a very complex case as evidenced in the findings – involving very serious neglect to vulnerable children. We are very pleased that the outcome of the court case was consistent with the Local Authority’s original application to the court – to safeguard very vulnerable children who were at risk of suffering significant harm as a result of neglect.

There are some aspects of the Court’s criticism that we believe are not quite correct however and are considering our position in this regard. We do accept that there were deficiencies in some of the social worker practice in this case and subsequent action was taken, including termination of one social worker’s employment with the County Council. We are satisfied that at no stage did any of the named officers deliberately mislead the courts”.

#### 181/15 **REPORTS FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLORS**

Cllr. Peter Armstrong had previously submitted a written report and had nothing further to add.

Cllr James Binns reported that the dementia groups across the New Forest have folded due to the cut in funding from Hampshire County Council, however, working with our partners through the Health and Wellbeing Partnership Board, and other voluntary organisations, the Health and Leisure Department at NFDC are trying very hard to try and

get these up and running again. New Forest health and wellbeing action plan currently being refreshed following workshop on 15<sup>th</sup> September. Priority areas will continue to be Starting well, Living Well, Ageing well and healthy communities. There will be emphasis on mental health due to increasing cases of dementia in the New Forest.

Cllr Binns informed Members that Jamie Burton of NFDC who, through partnership working with collaboration, has managed to set up a wheelchair rugby team based at Totton Leisure Centre. The only cost to the Council was time, and so we are grateful to our partners for providing equipment, such as the wheelchairs, free of use. I am reliably informed that members of this team came from across the Waterside, including Hythe, and have been very popular. Members from this team and subsequently trying out for the 2016 Paralympics in Rio.

Cllr James Binns reported that he had attended the Waterside Cancer Support Centre 5th birthday party and they had asked him to convey their thanks to the Parish for all of the Council's hard effort and partnership working with the organisation.

Cllr James Binns reported that Councillor Kate Crisell had hoped to report on the Child Poverty work herself but owing to her being ill she had asked James to report. The task and finish group has conducted its report and has fundamentally concluded that transport is one of the biggest issues when it comes to the prevention of child poverty. The report suggests that a lack of service provision is not the issue, however, getting to this provision where residents can receive friendly advice and guidance is a key contributing factor to child poverty. NFDC will subsequently be looking at our investment in community transport.

Cllr James Binns reported that the NFDC corporate plan will shortly be released.

Cllr. Bill Andrews reported that he had attended the inauguration of Hythe Shopwatch that day and applauded the initiative for community and local business involvement in its own protection. Cllr. Andrews also had interesting and constructive discussions with local business proprietors, particularly one from Waitrose on the subject of the town's external image and attraction to visitors.

Cllr. Andrews attended a Members' Treasury Management Briefing by Arlingclose at HCC for a presentation and Question & Answer session regarding the investment climate, strategies and future consideration for funds from HCC and Districts.

Cllr. Andrews is working with NFDC's Housing Portfolio Holder, in conjunction with Cllr. Dan Poole, to accommodate a disabled parishioner more suitably.

Cllr. Andrews informed Members that the Management structure at NFDC is being reduced and all senior managers have been asked to

re-apply for a reduced number of posts, redundancy or re-deployment which is expected to produce an annual saving of some £300,000. It is not expected to have a knock-on effect on the Members' Cabinet or Portfolio Holder structure.

Cllr. Andrews is in communication and discussion with Rev. Peter Murphy over mitigation of the potential loss of parking amenity for St. John's Church with the proposed changes in the vicinity.

#### 182/15 **REPORTS FROM MEMBERS ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

Cllr. Eric Davey had previously submitted a written report and had nothing further to add.

Cllr. Alex Wade updated Members following a meeting of Hythe Youth Club Management Committee. The Youth Club made a surplus of nearly £3,000 this year, partly down to the success of the tuck shop and the popularity of hiring out the venue for parties and other events. There have also been donations from Exxon and Waitrose.

The club requires much refurbishment work in the year ahead, in the form of painting and structural work. There are also plans to provide outdoor seating areas for use in the summer, as well as external steps. The club is always grateful to receive contributions towards maintaining the premises and to fund training courses for volunteers.

The Youth Workers and volunteers have provided extensive activities: holiday clubs, arts and crafts, Sports in the Park, advice on how to write a CV, a visit to Thorpe Park and the Pantomime. The provision of an after school club will also be trialled for students at Applemore College which will provide them somewhere to relax, complete homework and have a warm snack. If the trial is successful, consideration will be given to opening it to a wider group.

Both staff and volunteers have undertaken various training courses throughout the year.

Cllr. Alex Wade passed on his thanks to the whole team and indicated that he will be giving a grant of £250 towards funding transport for the pantomime trip.

Cllr. Trevor Johnson updated Members on a new Age Concern shop that is opening in Blackfield. It will be a 'Pound Shop' which is a concept trialled in Preston and which worked very well.

#### 183/15 **QUESTIONS TO DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS AND REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES ARISING FROM THEIR REPORTS**

Cllr. Malcolm Wade asked Cllr. Bill Andrews what strategy the District Council has in place to deal with the shortfall resulting from a 30%

reduction for local government over the next 4 years. Cllr. Andrews responded that he did not know but would find out and provide the information.

184/15 **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIR OF COUNCIL**

There were no questions asked.

185/15 **PLANNING COMMITTEE**

The Chairman of the Planning Committee requested investigation into the process for consideration and adoption of the Minutes of the Planning Committee. He felt that he was unable to present the minutes as they have not been considered by that group.

RESOLVED

That the procedure for the adoption of Minutes from standing committee meetings be relayed to Chairmen of the Standing Committees and the Chairman of the Council and the Minutes of the Planning Committee then be considered at the next meeting of Council.

186/15 **DEVOLUTION FOR HAMPSHIRE**

Cllr. Malcolm Wade updated Members on the progress and benefits of Devolution for Hampshire including Southampton, Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight.

187/15 **SOLENT CREDIT UNION**

Cllr. Peter Armstrong reported that he had been involved in talks with Solent Credit Union for the past 12 months to provide a Credit Union facility in Hythe. NFDC has facilitated Solent Credit Union to start operating in Hythe on a weekly basis from January 2016.

Cllr Malcolm Wade suggested that if it known why the previous Credit Union failed then this would assist in the risk management of the new Credit Union.

Cllr. Armstrong requested Members to allow the facility to operate from the Council Chamber.

RESOLVED that

The Council Chamber is made available, free of charge, for use by Solent Credit Union for a pilot period of 6 months starting from 12 January 2016 after which the Credit Union could apply for a grant.

**188/15 MEMORIALS**

Members received the Minutes of the previous meeting for their information and the draft Terms of Reference for the Task and Finish Group. The Clerk informed Members of the process for a special resolution.

RESOLVED that

- a) The minutes of the meeting of the Memorials Task and Finish Group held on 12 November 2015 be received.
- b) The Terms of Reference for the Task and Finish Group be agreed.
- c) The Clerk to email Members in order to obtain agreement for a special resolution to reconsider the provision of a WW1 memorial bench at Prospect Place.

**189/15 CHRISTMAS LIGHTS**

Cllr. James Binns, Chairman of the Christmas Lights Working Party, presented the draft strategy for Christmas Lights 2016 – 2019. Cllr Binns emphasised that Dibden Purlieu are included in the new strategy and that the old Christmas lights will be offered to traders in other areas for them to use

RESOLVED that

The strategy for Christmas Lights 2016 – 2019 is adopted

The Clerk informed Members that the annual donation of a Christmas tree for the village centre had been withdrawn for 2015 at very short notice. However, the Maintenance and Facilities Supervisor had been able to source a Christmas tree at a cost of £750.

**190/15 FOREST FRONT PLAY AREA**

The Deputy Clerk reported that the Section 106 money, (£49,600) had been received. Work on the refurbishment of the Forest Front Play area was planned to start on 7 December 2015 and would be completed by the Christmas holidays.

**191/15 SANDBAG POLICY**

The Clerk presented a report on sandbags and a draft Sandbag Policy. A short demonstration of the suggested emergency grab bags was also given.

RESOLVED that

- a) The policy for sandbags is adopted.
- b) A number of Active Hydro Sacks and equivalent be purchased as cheaply as possible to be available for Members to trial.
- c) An emergency grab bag, Household Emergency Action Plan and details of the emergency sandbag equivalents available from the Parish Council be made available to every household and business identified as at higher risk of flooding.

192/15 **ACCREDITED COMMUNITY SAFETY OFFICERS**

The Clerk updated Members on the challenges experienced on delivering the ACSO service together with the past and present focus of the service. A written report had previously been provided.

Cllr. Alex Wade thanked officers for their efforts in keeping the community messaging service going.

RESOLVED that

The report on the Accredited Community Safety Service is noted.

193/15 **NEW FOREST BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP**

Members were asked to consider adopting the New Forest Business Partnership as an external body and to agree the appointment of a representative. Three councillors had volunteered for this role; Cllrs Harrison, Wade (A), and Armstrong. As the Chairman of the Council was standing as a candidate and in the absence of the Vice Chair, item b) of the resolution was chaired by Cllr. Malcolm Wade.

RESOLVED that

- a) The New Forest Business Partnership is adopted as an external body.
- b) Cllr Peter Armstrong is elected as the Parish Council representative on the New Forest Business Partnership



194/15 **WRITTEN REPORTS**

Following the introduction of a trial of written reports by County and District Councillors and Representatives on Outside Bodies, the Chairman sought the views of the Members with regard to the way forward.

RESOLVED that

- a) Councillors can continue to submit written reports to be included on the agenda for each meeting.
- b) A reasonable period continues to be allowed at full council meetings for Councillors to give verbal updates.
- b) The amount of time considered a reasonable period is at the discretion of the Chairman.

Members were reminded that the reports are not to include case work and are to be of relevance to the Parish

195/15 **FINANCE 2015 - 2016**

Consideration was given to the Bank Reconciliation for September 2015 and the Schedule of Payments for the period 17 October 2015 to 15 November 2015.

RESOLVED that

- a) The bank reconciliation for September 2015 be noted.
- b) Accounts as detailed totalling £52,426.56 be agreed and paid.

The meeting closed at 8.46 p.m

Chairman

Date

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