

HYTHE AND DIBDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the
Hythe and Dibden Parish Council
Held at The Grove, 25 St. John's Street, Hythe
On Monday 13 March 2006 at 8 pm

Members: *Mr M Short (Chairman) – in the Chair

*Mr J Bennett	*Mr R Podesta
oMr G Dawson	*Mrs M J Robinson
*Mr R Guy	*Mrs B Smith
*Mr C Harrison	oMr D Smith
oMrs M McLean	*Mr M S Wade
*Mr G Parkes	*Mr S S Wade

* Indicates attendance
o Indicates apologies for absence

In attendance: Mr B Dash – Hampshire County Councillor
Mr L Dunsdon - Hampshire County Councillor
Mr D J Shimpe (Clerk to the Council)
Ms S A Maitland (Deputy Clerk to the Council)
Mrs C Patterson (Minute Clerk)

Also present: 5 Members of the Public

/05 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

/05 **Minutes**

Consideration was given to the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 6 February 2006.

(a) Minute 375/05

It was agreed that paragraph 8 should be amended to read "... that over 80% of people who responded do not want wheelie bins."

(b) General

RESOLVED

That, subject to the above, the Minutes of the Council held on 6 February 2006 be signed by the Chairman as correct.

/05 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman had no announcements to make.

/05 **Reports of County Councillors on County Council matters concerning the Parish**

The County budget increase has been confirmed at 4.7%.

Education is now funded direct from central government.

A split in social services means that there will be 2 departments; one for adults and one for children and education.

A £10 million overspend means that there will be severe cuts in the level of services to the elderly, disabled and other vulnerable adults.

A government initiative with £8 million funding means that 50 children's centres will be set up around the country. An existing Sure Start centre in Heather Road Blackfield is very successful

and it is hoped to set up a core centre in Hythe with satellite centres around it in places such as Butts Ash, Furzedown and Hardley.

An Assistant Director has just been appointed for Children's Services and further changes are expected.

Action teams are being set up to identify problems with children early so that they can be dealt with before they become a major issue. There is a good existing network in this area between the voluntary and public sectors which we would not want to see dismantled.

A big investment is to be made in car free tourism in the New Forest National Park. A forest bus will run with double the frequency of last year and the National Park Authority are to make a contribution towards the cost.

A crossing is being constructed on the A326 at Applemore. There is some discussion over whether it should be a Pelican or Pegasus crossing, although both will cost a similar amount.

Items currently in the transport plans are the Hardley to Hythe cycle route which is expected to cost £270,000 of which £149,000 is currently available, Hythe town centre (mainly for pedestrians in St John's Street), Pylewell cycle route, improvements to the crossing at the top of Claypits Lane and a study of traffic at Fairview Parade.

There has been a lot of criticism of the bureaucracy involved in the National Park Authority. Senior officers are to be taken on who will advise and guide other organisations.

The National Park Authority will take over responsibility for planning matters on 1 April 2006, which is expected to save £400,000 per annum.

A theatre group has been going around local schools to educate them on energy conservation in houses in a fun and informative way.

/05

Reports of District Councillors on District Council matters concerning the Parish

The budget was agreed as predicted, with the amendment that Hythe Sailing Club will not have to pay as much council tax as anticipated.

There will be a referendum on the use of rubbish bags or wheelie bins.

The Leader of the Council wishes to accelerate the toilet rebuilding programme due to the anticipated skills shortage which may occur due to the Olympic building programme.

Waiting lists for homes in the area are rising. The present waiting times are up to 8 years for a 1 bedroom flat, 10 years for a 2 bedroom house and 5 years for a 3 bedroom house. However, it is thought that many people never register their need for housing.

There is likely to be a strike of local government workers on 28 March 2006 over changes to the pension scheme. The District Council expects to provide an emergency service equivalent to that run on Christmas Day.

The portfolio holder has advised that discussions are ongoing concerning the problems with sickness with the ACSOs and lack of the paid for service.

No indications have been given that Hythe will receive any further help with crime prevention although it has the largest problem with anti social behaviour in the New Forest and has not got CCTV.

Planning permission has been granted for the Trafalgar House site, subject to conditions.

Planning permission has again been refused for a site in the High Street in Hythe due to flooding concerns irrespective of the preventative measures which have been taken.

The District Council Development Control Committee requested that the County Council looked into the archaeology at the site of a planning application in Hythe but the County Council said it was of no interest which was disappointing.

/05

Reports of Representatives on Outside Bodies

Mr S Wade has been very impressed with the level of training received from the National Park Authority.

The National Park Authority will take over the relevant provisions of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 which will mean promoting access to the New Forest for everyone.

Work needs to be put in to maintain the Sites of Special Scientific Interest in the National Park and it is hoped to have 95% of them in a favourable condition by 2010.

Skills are being lost in the National Park which need to be maintained.

/05 **Questions to District and County Councillors and Representatives on Outside Bodies arising from their reports**

Mr Short advised Mr Dash that he welcomed the crossing on the A326, but wondered whether any of the other crossings along the road would be closed.

Mr Dash replied that the only crossings along the road are unofficial ones. Unfortunately, people cannot be forced to use the crossings provided but measures have been taken to reduce accidents with the provision of anti skid surfaces and notices stating that pedestrians may be crossing.

Mr Podesta suggested that a 30 mph limit be imposed along a 3 mile stretch of the A326. Mr Dash agreed to raise the matter with the County Council.

Mr Short asked Mr S Wade whether it was correct that the Forestry Commission's 100 year plan for working on trees had been accepted by the National Park Authority.

Mr Wade responded that it was accepted that the Forestry Commission had a greater knowledge of forestry and there was a management plan with a series of priorities.

Mr S Wade asked Mr Dash to clarify the position on the provision of a new day centre for the elderly at Challenger Way.

Mr Dash replied that approval had been given and £700,000 earmarked for the project, but this was not sufficient. Little support had been received from the District Council but the matter was being pursued.

Mr Podesta asked the County Councillors whether the bus touring the New Forest would link with Hythe Ferry.

The County Councillors advised that it is a normal bus which tours the more scenic parts of the forest and believed that it would link with Hythe Ferry but agreed to clarify the situation.

Mr Podesta asked Mr Parkes whether New Forest District Council is the only one which sticks rigidly to Environment Agency guidance on flooding as other councils do not seem to.

Mr Parkes responded that the District Council takes it seriously, but perhaps should realise that it is only guidance and make allowance for flood prevention systems.

Mr Bennett asked Mr Dash to clarify the minimum width requirement for a cycle lane. Mr Dash agreed to investigate and contact him.

Mr S Wade asked whether those travelling free on Public Transport are covered by insurance. It was thought that public liability insurance would cover this.

/05 **Questions under Standing Orders 25 and 26**

Mrs Smith asked whether the Chairman was aware that benefit take up in respect of council tax is still very low and suggested putting an article in the Parish Picture to make residents aware of the benefits.

The Chairman agreed to include an article in the Parish Picture.

Mr M Wade asked whether the Chairman was aware of the large potholes in Whitewater Rise which reappear even after treatment. He suggested that the whole surface needs replacing to cure the problem.

Mr Guy asked whether the Chairman was aware of any changes in legislation which have resulted in many councillors being barred from meetings. Although they are elected to represent the public, due to what is considered a prejudicial interest, many councillors have been barred from participating in meetings even if that interest is merely to have a definite opinion on a matter before a debate takes place. He agreed to pass all the information he had collated to the Clerk to investigate the matter further.

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At this point the Meeting adjourned to allow a Public Forum to be held.

A. Community Wardens

Mr Vickers drew Members' attention to the 18% increase in the Parish part of the council tax due to the provision of 2 community wardens and stated that he was sceptical about running a separate scheme to the ACSOs. He felt it would confuse the public to run 2 schemes and undermine the existing ACSOs whilst not having the powers the community expect it to have. His preferred option would be to make the ACSO system work and contribute to it.

A representative of "Mum's Army" advised Members that she had collected many signatures from people who want a one level approach and felt that not enough information had been given to the Public on the matter.

Mr Vickers further felt that the debate to be held later in the meeting should include the public.

The Clerk informed the meeting that all previous debates concerning the Community Wardens had been held in the public domain but this item contained details of negotiations for contracts which are deemed commercially sensitive information under Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972.

The Chairman advised that one of the options on the agenda was an extension of the ACSO system and that the public had been advised of all meetings on the matter, many had completed questionnaires sent out with local newspapers and the matter had been mentioned several times in the quarterly Parish Picture which goes to every home in the Parish.

Mr Uglow agreed that the budget should provide for safety in the community and suggested that a review should be made to include CCTV etc.

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The Council Meeting then resumed.

/05

Reports of Committees

(a) Planning Committee – 6 February 2006

Consideration was given to the Minutes of the Planning Committee held on 6 February 2006.

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Planning Committee held on 6 February 2006 be received and adopted.

(b) Planning Committee – 13 February 2006

Consideration was given to the Minutes of the Planning Committee held on 13 February 2006.

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Planning Committee held on 13 February 2006 be received and adopted.

(c) Amenities Committee – 13 February 2006

Consideration was given to the Minutes of the Amenities Committee held on 13 February 2006.

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Amenities Committee held on 13 February 2006 be received and adopted.

(d) Planning Committee – 20 February 2006

Consideration was given to the Minutes of the Planning Committee held on 13 February 2006.

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Planning Committee held on 13 February 2006 be received and adopted.

(e) General Purposes and Finance Committee – 20 February 2006

Consideration was given to the Minutes of the General Purposes and Finance Committee held on 13 February 2006.

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the General Purposes and Finance Committee held on 13 February 2006 be received and adopted.

/05 **Accounts for Payment**

The Clerk submitted a schedule of accounts for payment, together with a supplementary list.

RESOLVED

That accounts as detailed in Vouchers inclusive, totalling £, be approved and paid.