

16 FEBRUARY 2011

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

POLLING DISTRICTS WORKING PARTY

Minutes of a meeting of the Polling Districts Working Party held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Wednesday 16 February 2011.

Councillors:

p G C Beck
p Mrs P Jackman
p A W Rice

Councillors:

p W S Rippon-Swaine
p S S Wade

Officers Attending:

Ms L Collins; Ms D Everett and Mrs R Rutins

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN.

RESOLVED:

That Cllr Rice be elected Chairman of the Working Party.

The Chairman (Cllr Rice) in the chair.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

No declarations of interest were made by members in connection with any agenda item.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

No issues were raised during the public participation period.

4. REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES (REPORT A).

The Working Party was reminded that the General Purposes and Licensing Committee had agreed to undertake a general review of polling districts and polling places earlier than the statutory four-yearly interval at the request of the Electoral Commission. The Commission was concerned not to repeat problems that had occurred in other areas of the country at some polling stations at the May 2010 Parliamentary elections. Although no problems had been experienced at polling stations in this District, the Committee had been content to commence the review early as it wished the Working Party to consider carefully the viability of some little used polling stations in the District. In agreeing to undertake the review, the Committee had been mindful of the need to ensure that the polling stations represented value for money, but also that cost was but one of the factors to be

taken into account. The major consideration was the provision of such reasonable and accessible facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances.

The difference between polling districts, polling places and polling stations was explained. Members noted that, unless special circumstances applied, a polling place and a polling station should be within the related polling district.

Members considered the schedule of polling districts, polling places and polling stations which had formed the basis of consultation with the public, and did not have any issues to raise other than those highlighted in Report A. It was, however, noted that the County Council was considering the possible sale of the Fernmount Centre and its long-term availability as a polling station was uncertain.

4.1 Low Usage Polling Stations:

The polling stations with low usage were considered as follows:

4.1.1 Fritham Free Church, Fritham

The views of Cllr Edward Heron, the County Councillor for the area, and those of Bramshaw Parish Council, both supporting the retention of this polling station, were noted. Members were advised that if the polling station was discontinued, Fritham voters wishing to vote in person at a polling station would have to travel approximately 3 miles to what would be the alternative polling station, Bramshaw Village Hall.

Members were of the view that a polling station should be retained in Fritham but suggested that the officers investigate whether a more suitable venue in Fritham could be identified. The public house which sometimes had a marquee-type structure erected, was suggested. It was agreed that officers would make further enquiries and report to the General Purposes and Licensing Committee on 11 March.

4.1.2 Reading Room, Hinton Admiral

Members considered the retention of this polling station at length. They noted that it had a higher than average turnout, 64%, but also that only 101 voters had voted there at the May 2010 Parliamentary elections, an average of 6.7 electors per hour. On balance, the Working Party decided to recommend its retention but that its use be kept under review.

4.1.3 Thorney Hill Community Centre, Thorney Hill

In percentage terms, this polling station had the lowest turnout of those identified as low usage, but it had the highest number. Members noted that it served a distinct community, some distance from the next available facility at the Bransgore Village Hall, and the Working Party considered that it should be retained.

4.1.4 Caravan adj Telephone Kiosk, Wootton Farm Road

Members were unanimous that this polling station should be discontinued and the voters reallocated to the St Johns Church Hall in Bashley, where there was already a polling station serving the Bashley ward. It was noted that the St Johns Church Hall was outside of the BM polling district, but considered that special circumstances applied to warrant the designation of a polling place and polling station outside of the polling district.

4.1.5 Exbury Club, Exbury

It was noted that Exbury & Lepe Parish Council did not oppose the proposal to discontinue this polling station and reallocate voters to the Beaulieu Village Hall. Members agreed that this should be done. The polling station would be outside the EX polling district but members were of the view that the high cost per elector of the provision at Exbury Club meant that a venue outside of the polling district was warranted.

4.1.6 Bisterne Village Hall, Bisterne

Ringwood Town Council supported the retention of this polling station. It was agreed that this polling station should remain. It was noted that there was a high turnout in percentage terms, the cost of the provision of the polling station at this venue was not considered excessive, and that voters wishing to cast their votes in person would have to travel either to the Public Offices at Ringwood (the future of which was uncertain because of the proposals for the Ringwood Gateway Scheme) or to the Village Hall at Sopley.

4.2 Other issues

The Working Party considered other issues raised by the Returning Officer in Report A, as follows:

4.2.1 RA, RB and RC Polling Districts – Ringwood North District Ward - Polling Station at Community Centre, Poulner Junior School

The Working Party agreed that an additional polling station should be identified for some voters in RA, RB or RC polling districts, currently all voting at the Community Centre, Poulner Junior School, to ease pressure on that polling station. It was reported that, for a number of reasons, but principally parking and access issues, the Errington Hall at Stillwater Park was not considered suitable. It was noted that the owners of the Scout Hall in Southampton Road, adjacent to the A31, were not willing to make the premises available for use as a polling station. The Working Party therefore agreed that RC voters be allocated to the St John the Baptist Church Hall in Linford Road, Poulner, in RH polling district. Members noted that this polling station would not be within RC polling district but considered that the special circumstances applying warranted the polling station being situated outside the polling district.

It was agreed to recommend that the boundary between RA and RC polling districts be redrawn so that Lilac Close and Winston Way fell within RA polling district, because voters in those roads would find it more convenient to vote at the current polling station at Poulner Junior School. It was noted that it would be preferable to delay the change in polling district until the new registers were published in December 2011, but that the registers could be “split” so that voters in the roads mentioned could continue to vote at the Community Centre on 5 May 2011.

4.2.2 TG and TH Polling Districts – Totton North District Ward – Polling Station at Calmore Community Centre

It was noted that the Chief Counting Officer for the referendum had directed that no more than 2,500 electors should be allocated to a single polling station. After taking account of electors voting by post, TG polling district had 2,759 electors. Whilst noting that no difficulties with queues had occurred at the polling stations at

Calmore Community Centre, the Working Party accepted that it would be advisable to reduce the size of the TG polling district. The Working Party agreed to recommend that voters in the roads set out in recommendation (b) below be moved from TG to TH polling district. To avoid the need to republish registers it would be preferable for this change to come into effect on 1 December 2011, but the polling station registers could be "split" for the election so that the voters in the roads set out in recommendation (b) could vote at the TH polling station on 5 May.

The Working Party noted that all voters who would be allocated to a different polling station would be informed in writing of the changes before the despatch of poll cards. Political parties and candidates at the election would also be informed of the changes so that they could assist to bring the changes to the attention of voters when canvassing for the election.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) ***That, with effect from 1 December 2011, the RA and RC polling districts be amended by moving Lilac Close and Winston Way from RC to RA polling district;***
- (b) ***That, with effect from 1 December 2011, the TG and TH polling districts be amended by moving voters in the following roads from TG to TH polling districts:***

***Court Close
Buckland Gardens
Warren Place
Cooks Lane
Pauletts Lane
Loperwood Lane
Flowerdown Close
Cedarwood Close***

RESOLVED:

- (c) That it be recommended to the Cabinet that, because of the special circumstances that apply –
- (i) EX and BA polling districts be designated as the polling place for EX polling district;
 - (ii) BM and NF polling districts be designated as the polling place for BM polling district;
 - (iii) RC and RH polling districts be designated as the polling place for RC polling district.
- (d) That it be recommended to the Returning Officer that, because of the special circumstances that apply –
- (i) The polling station at Exbury Club be discontinued and that EX voters be allocated to the Beaulieu Village Hall (in BA polling district);

- (ii) The polling station (caravan) at Wootton be discontinued and that BM voters be allocated to the St Johns Church Hall in Bashley (in NF polling district);
- (iii) RC voters, with the exception of those in Lilac Close and Winston Way, be reallocated to the St John the Baptist Church Hall in Linford Road, Poulner;
- (iv) the RC register in use at the polling stations on 5 May 2011 be "split" so that voters in Lilac Close and Winston Way continue to vote at the Community Centre at Poulner Junior School;
- (v) the TG register in use at the May 2011 elections be "split" so that voters in

Court Close
Buckland Gardens
Warren Place
Cooks Lane
Pauletts Lane
Loperwood Lane
Flowerdown Close
Cedarwood Close

vote at the TH polling station at Calmore Community Centre

- (e) That the officers investigate and report to the Committee on a possible alternative polling station for BF voters in Fritham;
- (f) That no other changes to polling stations be recommended at this stage, but that the continued use of the polling station at the Reading Room, Hinton Admiral, be kept under review;
- (g) That the Returning Officer be requested to inform, in writing, all electors affected by changes in polling stations at the 5 May 2011 elections in good time to allow them to apply for a postal or proxy vote, should they so wish, and that candidates and political parties be requested to assist in publicising the changes;

5. NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that it was not necessary to arrange a further meeting of the Working Party.

CHAIRMAN

11 MARCH 2011

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

GENERAL PURPOSES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the General Purposes and Licensing Committee held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Friday, 11 March 2011.

e Cllr L R Puttock (Chairman)
p Cllr J Penwarden (Vice-Chairman – in the Chair)

Councillors:

p G C Beck
p W H Dow
e J A G Hutchins
p Mrs P Jackman
p Mrs M McLean
p A W Rice TD
p W S Rippon-Swaine

Councillors:

p R F Scrivens
p Mrs B Smith
p M S Wade
p S S Wade
p P R Woods
p Mrs P A Wyeth

Officers Attending:

Mrs R Rutins and, for part of the meeting, Mrs L Battersby, Miss D Everett, Miss T Harwood and P Weston.

In attendance:

Mr D Biggs, Clerk to Totton & Eling Town Council (Min No. 43)

40. MINUTES.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2011 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

41. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

Cllr Scrivens declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Minute No. 43.

42. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

No members of the public addressed the Committee during the public participation period.

43. STREET TRADING – PROPOSALS FOR WEEKLY MARKET OFF SALISBURY ROAD, TOTTON (REPORT A).

Cllr Scrivens declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item as a member of the Totton and Eling Town Council. He withdrew from the meeting and remained absent during the consideration and voting.

The Committee considered Totton and Eling Town Council's request to establish a weekly "street market" on Wednesdays on the slip road off Salisbury Road north of the junction with Water Lane. It was noted that the request before the Committee was the first stage in the process of obtaining authorisation for the street market, and was a request for the Committee to agree a "notice of intention to pass a resolution". This decision would be published, consultations undertaken and a further report brought to the next meeting to consider any representations received. It was noted that, in addition to the statutory notices that had to be published, Totton and Eling Town Council was consulting local traders, residents and statutory authorities. Comments received would be submitted to the Committee in June.

Members support the recommendation.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That, in accordance with Schedule 4 to the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982, notice be published in a local newspaper as soon as possible of the Committee's intention to pass the following draft resolution on 10 June 2011:

"That Salisbury Road Service Road (west side) north of Water Lane junction, Totton, be designated a consent street within the meaning of Schedule 4 to the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982, and that this designation comes into force on 13 July 2011"; and

- (b) That a report setting out responses to the public notice, and giving information on other unresolved aspects, be brought to the 10 June 2011 meeting of this Committee.

Action: Lynne Battersby

44. REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES (REPORT B).

The Committee considered the report of the Working Party set up to oversee the review of polling districts and polling places.

Members supported the Working Party's recommendations.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) *That, with effect from 1 December 2011, the RA and RC polling districts be amended by moving Lilac Close and Winston Way from RC to RA polling district; and*
- (b) *That, with effect from 1 December 2011, the TG and TH polling districts be amended by moving voters in the following roads from TG to TH:*

**Court Close
Buckland Gardens
Warren Place
Cooks Lane
Pauletts Lane
Loperwood Lane
Flowerdown Close
Cedarwood Close**

RESOLVED:

- (c) That it be recommended to the Cabinet that, because of the special circumstances that apply –
- (i) EX and BA polling districts be designated as the polling place for EX polling district;
 - (ii) BM and NF polling districts be designated as the polling place for BM polling district;
 - (iii) RC and RH polling districts be designated as the polling place for RC polling district.

- (d) ***That it be recommended to the Returning Officer –***

That, because of the special circumstances that apply -

- (i) The polling station at Exbury Club be discontinued and that EX voters be allocated to the Beaulieu Village Hall (in BA polling district);
- (ii) The polling station (caravan) at Wootton be discontinued and that BM voters be allocated to the St Johns Church Hall in Bashley (in NF polling district);
- (iii) RC voters, with the exception of those in Lilac Close and Winston Way, be reallocated to the St John the Baptist Church Hall in Linford Road, Poulner;
- (iv) the RC register in use at the polling stations on 5 May 2011 be “split” so that voters in Lilac Close and Winston Way continue to vote at the Community Centre at Poulner Junior School;
- (v) the TG register in use at the May 2011 elections be “split” so that voters in

Court Close
Buckland Gardens
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Loperwood Lane
Flowerdown Close
Cedarwood Close

vote at the TH polling station at Calmore Community Centre

- (e) That the Valetta Barn in Fritham be used as a polling station for BF voters instead of the Fritham Free Church;
- (f) That no other changes to polling stations be recommended at this stage, but that the continued use of the polling station at the Reading Room, Hinton Admiral, be kept under review;
- (g) That all electors affected by changes in polling stations for the 5 May 2011 elections be advised of the changes in good time to allow them to apply for a postal or proxy vote, should they so wish, and that candidates and political parties be requested to assist in publicising the changes.

Action: Rosemary Rutins

45. ENFORCEMENT – LICENSING ACT 2003 (REPORT C).

The Committee reviewed enforcement and compliance actions relating to the Licensing Act 2003 undertaken by the Licensing Enforcement Officer from November 2008 to 31 December 2010. Members were pleased with the action that had been taken and considered that the work of the Enforcement Officer was essential in achieving a well-run licensed trade in the District. They considered that the public was reassured that enforcement activities were taking place.

Although pleased with the results shown in the report, the Committee felt that there could be more cross-departmental liaison on licensing or licensing-related matters. Members were assured that work was ongoing to achieve improved co-ordination at officer level in some areas, but because of the wide variety of functions undertaken across the authority this was not always easy. Members asked, however, that officers endeavour to move this aspect forward. There was also a view that local members should be informed when enforcement action of any sort was to be taken in their areas.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted and that the Committee looks forward to improved results and greater co-ordination across services in the future.

46. LAST MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE.

The Vice-Chairman referred to the fact that this was the last meeting of the Committee before the quadrennial elections on 5 May 2011. He thanked members for their contributions over the past four years and wished them good luck at the coming elections.

CHAIRMAN

(GPLC110311)

EXTRACT FROM CABINET MEETING MINUTES HELD ON 6 APRIL 2011

79. REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES (REPORT D).

The Cabinet considered recommendations from the Polling Districts Working Party as supported by the General Purposes and Licensing Committee.

It was noted that the designation of Polling Districts was a matter for the Council; the designation of Polling Places was a matter for the Cabinet and the designation of Polling Stations a matter for the Returning Officer. In the light of changes to some polling stations there was a need to change some polling places.

RESOLVED:

That, in the light of the review of Polling Districts and Polling Places, and insofar as they are required to do by law, and because of the special circumstances that apply

- (i) EX and BA polling districts be designated as the polling place for EX polling district;
- (ii) BM and NF polling districts be designated as the polling place for BM polling district; and
- (iii) RC and RH polling districts be designated as the polling place for RC polling district.

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES HELD ON 18 APRIL 2011

Report of General Purposes and Licensing Committee (see below)

Cllr Penwarden, as Vice-Chairman of the Committee, presented the report of the Committee meeting held on 11 March 2011.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received and the recommendations adopted.

REPORT OF GENERAL PURPOSES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE

(Meeting held 11 March 2011)

1. REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES (REPORT B) (MINUTE NO. 44)

The law requires electoral registration authorities to review polling districts and polling places at least every four years. The next review in New Forest District was due to commence later this year, but, following a request from the Electoral Commission arising from problems experienced at some polling stations in other parts of the country at the 2010 Parliamentary elections, the Committee decided to undertake a review a year earlier than required. The Committee also wished, as part of the review, to assess the viability of some little used polling stations.

The Committee appointed a Working Party to oversee the review. In undertaking the review, the Working Party and the Committee have been mindful of the need to ensure that polling stations represent value for money, but have borne in mind that cost is only one of the factors to be taken into account. The major consideration is the provision of such reasonable and accessible facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances.

The review was published on the Council's website and comments were invited from all district councillors, parish and town councils and disability groups. Only three responses were received. All relevant documents were kept available for inspection at the Council's Information Offices. All members of the Council were invited to attend the meeting of the Working Party on 16 February 2011.

The Council is reminded that responsibility for the designation of polling districts, polling places and polling stations falls to different bodies and individuals:

- The designation of polling districts is a matter for the Council
- The designation of polling places is a matter for the Executive
- The designation of polling stations is a matter for the Returning Officer

Unless special circumstances apply, a polling place and a polling station should be within the polling district to which they relate.

Members have spent some time considering polling stations with low usage, and have recommended to the Returning Officer that the polling stations at Exbury Club and the Caravan at Wootton be discontinued, and that voters be re-allocated to the Beaulieu Village Hall and St John's Church Hall in Bashley respectively. This

change requires a change to the designated polling place (a Cabinet function) and a recommendation to this effect was made to the Cabinet on 6 April.

The Committee has also considered an alternative venue for some voters allocated to the Community Centre at Poulner Junior School, which is considered too small for the number of electors voting there. The Committee has recommended to the Returning Officer and to the Cabinet that most of the voters in RC polling district be allocated to the St John the Baptist Church Hall in Linford Road, Poulner. A recommendation for a change in the polling district arising from this change appears below. The Cabinet has considered the designation of the polling place.

Finally, a further change to a polling district, this time in Totton, is required in order to meet the direction of the Chief Counting Officer for the referendum that no more than 2,500 voters (after deducting postal voters) may be allocated to a single polling station. There is only one polling station in the District which has more than 2,500 voters, that serving TG polling district at the Calmore Community Centre. A recommendation to adjust the polling districts to transfer some TG voters to TH polling district appears below.

All registered electors who will be affected by changes have been informed in writing of their new polling stations, and have been invited to apply for postal votes if they find their new polling stations inconvenient.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) *That, with effect from 1 December 2011, the RA and RC polling districts be amended by moving Lilac Close and Winston Way from RC to RA polling district; and*
- (b) *That, with effect from 1 December 2011, the TG and TH polling districts be amended by moving voters in the following roads from TG to TH:*

*Court Close
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Pauletts Lane
Loperwood Lane
Flowerdown Close
Cedarwood Close*

**Councillor J Penwarden
CHAIRMAN**

Report of General Purposes and Licensing Committee

Cllr Penwarden, as Vice-Chairman of the Committee, presented the report of the Committee meeting held on 11 March 2011.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received and the recommendations adopted.