

COUNCIL
21 JANUARY 2004
(7.30 pm – 10.10 pm)

Present: The Mayor (Councillor Mrs Pile), Councillors Adams, Baily, Mrs Ballin, Mrs Barnard, Barnard, Mrs Beadsley, Beadsley, Bettison, Mrs Birch, Birch, Browne, Brunel-Walker, Dudley, Earwicker, Edger, Finch, Finnie, Grayson, Harrison, Miss Haydon, Mrs Hayes, Jones, Kendall, Leake, McCracken, McLean, Mihell, Mills, North, Osborne, Packham, Piasecki, Mrs Ryder, Sargeant, Mrs Shillcock, Turrell, Wade and Ward.

Apologies for absence were received from:
Councillors Thompson and Worrall

Prior to the formal commencement of the meeting, all those present joined the Mayor in observing one minute's silence as a mark of respect for former Councillor John Tompkins who had recently passed away. The Reverend Richard Neill then opened the proceedings with a prayer.

57. Minutes (Item 2)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 3 December 2003 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

58. Declarations of Interest (Item 3)

Personal and prejudicial interests were recorded in relation to item 7 [Review of Primary School Provision in South Bracknell] in respect of Councillors Baily, Mrs Barnard, Mrs Beadsley, Mrs Birch, Browne, Osborne, Mrs Pile, Mills and Turrell by virtue of their being members of governing bodies of certain schools subject to the review.

Councillors Beadsley and Mrs Beadsley declared a personal and prejudicial interest in item 7 [Review of Primary School Revision in South Bracknell] by virtue of their daughter being employed at the Pines Junior School.

59. Mayor's Announcements (Item 4)

Tenants' and Leaseholders' Compact

On the invitation of the Mayor, Mr Richard Ireland, Chairman of the Tenants' and Leaseholders' Compact, and Councillor Barnard, Executive Member for Health, Social Care and Housing, paid tribute to the work of officers and others in developing and implementing the Tenants' and Leaseholders' Compact, an updated version of which had been signed at the last meeting of the Council.

"The Dorothy Hayes Room"

The Mayor announced that the Martins Heron Community Association and Residents' Association had opened a new facility at their community centre named "The Dorothy Hayes Room" in recognition of the support given over many years by Councillor Mrs Dorothy Hayes to the community in Martins Heron. On the invitation of the Mayor, Councillor Mrs Hayes thanked the members of the Community Association for this honour.

Christmas Boxes for Children and Young People

On the invitation of the Mayor, Councillor Miss Haydon, the Children and Young Peoples Champion, thanked fellow Members, members of the public and local businesses for their Christmas box contributions for the benefit of children and young people. She referred to the organisations who had benefited from the donations, which had included "NRG", MIND, Parents and Children Together, Holly House as well as the Council's family placement team.

Chairman of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority

The Mayor congratulated Councillor Mills on being elected Chairman of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority.

Energy Accreditation

The Mayor announced that the Council had again received an energy accreditation from the National Energy Foundation and was one of only 35 local authorities to be thus accredited. This had followed an assessment of good practice in the Council's transport fleet, the Council's use of 'green' electricity, and an overall strong commitment to energy efficiency in the Council. The Mayor congratulated the Director of Environment and his staff for their work in obtaining this accreditation.

Arts Development Officer

On the invitation of the Mayor, the Executive Member for Leisure Services, Councillor McCracken, announced the appointment of an arts development officer from 1 February 2004.

The Charity Pancake Race

The Mayor announced that the Charity Pancake Race would be taking place in Charles Square on Tuesday 24 February and the event was being organised by the Bracknell Regeneration Trust, the Grange Hotel and the Bracknell News. The Mayor also announced that she would be entering a team to participate in the event.

60. Petition Submitted Under Council Procedure Rule 9 (Item 5)

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9 [Public Participation], the Council received a petition from Mrs Janet Keene, Miss Sarah-Jane Keene and Mr Michael Fearon, the terms of which were as follows:

"We the undersigned believe that there is a serious under-provision of youth facilities in South Bracknell. There is no provision in Crown Wood, Forest Park, Wildridings, Easthampstead, Great Hollands, Birch Hill and Hanworth. We ask Bracknell Forest Borough Council to immediately allocate funding and consult with local community associations and young people to set up youth clubs for young people aged between 11 and 17 years in these areas. These should be open every night of the week with professional youth workers on the premises."

Following the presentation of the petition, the petitioners responded to questions from Members of the Council. The petition was then passed to the Executive Member for Leisure Services, Councillor McCracken, for him to consider his formal response.

61. Review of Primary School Provision in South Bracknell (Item 7)

Pursuant to the declarations of personal and prejudicial interests recorded in Minute 58 above, Councillors Baily, Mrs Barnard, Mrs Beadsley, Beadsley, Mrs Birch, Browne, Osborne, Mrs Pile, Mills and Turrell withdrew from the Council Chamber for the consideration of this item.

In the absence of the Mayor, Councillor Mrs Pile, and the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Browne, and on the nomination of Councillor Bettison, seconded by Councillor Barnard, it was

RESOLVED that Councillor Mrs Hayes preside at the meeting for the consideration of this item.

COUNCILLOR MRS HAYES IN THE CHAIR

The Director of Education and the Assistant Director of Education (Strategy, Planning and Resources) gave a presentation to the Council on the outcome of the review of primary school places in South Bracknell. Reference was made to an anticipated 883 surplus places by 2008 in the 13 schools subject to the review if no action were taken and the impact of such a surplus on the efficient use of resources within the schools.

The consultation process had been completed and following an analysis, the Executive had supported proposals for an amalgamation of the Pines Infant and Pines Junior Schools on the junior school site; and a reduction in the sizes of Birch Hill, Fox Hill, and Wildridings Primary Schools; with the housing development on the former Staff College Site falling with the designated area of Harmans Water Primary School.

On the proposition of Councillor Ward, seconded by Councillor Barnard, it was

RESOLVED that

- (i) the results of the consultation on the review of primary school places in South Bracknell be noted; and

- (ii) the following recommended changes to the organisation of schools in South Bracknell (as detailed in the report to the Executive on 20 January 2004) be supported:
- (a) the former Staff College Site be solely within the designated area of Harmans Water Primary School and not be part of the designated areas of Fox Hill and Wildridings Primary schools, (as shown in Annex F);
 - (b) the Pines Infant and the Pines Junior Schools be amalgamated to create a 210 place primary school on the Junior School site with effect from 1 September 2005, with a planned admission number of 30 with effect from 1 January 2006 and the designated area of the new school be the same as that of the two existing schools;
 - (c) arrangements for changes in the accommodation at The Pines be the subject of a further report for consultation with the governing bodies and the Church at the Pines;
 - (d) Fox Hill Primary School be reduced to a 210 place primary school with a planned admission number of 30 with effect from 1 January 2006; and the school be based in the Key Stage 2 building with effect from 1 September 2005; and the designated area of the school be reduced:
 - (i) so as not to include the Staff College site;
 - (ii) in the north to enable the boundary to run down the middle of the whole of the Bagshot Road;
 - (e) arrangements for changes to the accommodation at Fox Hill Primary School be the subject of a further report for consultation with the governing body;
 - (f) Wildridings Primary School be reduced to a 315 place primary school with a planned admission number of 45 with effect from 1 January 2006; and the designated area be reduced so as not to include the Staff College site;
 - (g) arrangements as to how the 90 places can be removed from Wildridings Primary School be the subject of further consultation with the governing body;
 - (h) the accommodation at Birch Hill Primary school be reduced to 449 places, as soon as circumstances allow, with a planned admission number of 60 being published for the school with effect from 1 January 2006.

Following the consideration of the above item, the meeting was adjourned between 9.15 and 9.25 pm.

THE MAYOR, COUNCILLOR MRS PILE, IN THE CHAIR

62. Executive Report (Item 6)

The Leader of the Council presented the Executive Report to the Council. Since the last Executive Report on 3 December 2003 the Executive had met on 16 December 2003 and 20 January 2004. The Council was advised that on 16 December 2003 decisions made been made in relation to the following matters:

- Restructuring Bracknell Forest Borough Council;
- Budget proposals 2004/2005;
- Community Cohesion Strategy;
- Corporate Performance Overview Report; and
- Policy Framework for Amen Corner.

The Leader of the Council also referred to matters which had been considered on 20 January 2004, which had included the review of primary school provision in South Bracknell; the revenue grant to South Hill Park; the Waste Management Strategy; the Relationship Manager and the External Auditors' Annual Management Letter; and the Comprehensive Performance Assessment.

The Leader highlighted that following a revised Comprehensive Performance Assessment, the Council had been categorised as "good" and referred in particular to service improvements in social services (particularly children's services), transport, housing, recycling and the overall use of resources. A further reassessment would take place in the autumn of 2004 and the Council would be aiming to be in the "excellent" category.

The Leader also referred to the housing stock options programme on which work had commenced in October 2003 and the possibility of the housing service achieving two stars which would enable all four possible options to be put to the tenants and leaseholders.

In relation to the redevelopment of Bracknell Town Centre the Leader reported that a planning application was anticipated in the spring of 2004. There were also discussions underway for the development of a 'healthplex' in Market Street, Bracknell.

The Leader of the Council and Executive Members responded to questions on the Executive Report.

63. Local Tax Discounts and the Calculation of the Council Tax Base 2004/2005 (Item 8)

The Council considered a report by the Director of Corporate Services which invited the Council to approve the calculation of the council tax base in accordance with the relevant regulations under the Local Government Finance Act 1992. The Council was also invited to determine the rate of discount which would apply to "second homes".

On the proposition of Councillor Birch, seconded by Councillor Bettison, it was

RESOLVED that

- (i) in accordance with the Local Government Act 2003, and in the circumstances provided for in subsequent regulations:

- (a) the Council Tax discount granted to taxpayers of properties which are nobody's sole or main residence (commonly referred to as "second homes") be reduced from the current 50% to 10%;
 - (b) no local variation be made to the current 50% discount for "long-term" empty properties, and
 - (c) no locally defined discounts be created; and
- (ii) pursuant to the report submitted and in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 1992, as amended, the amount calculated by Bracknell Forest Borough Council as its Council Tax Base for 2004/2005 be 41,440.

64. **Establishment of Appointment Committee: "Director of Environment and Leisure" (Item 9)**

The Chief Executive submitted a report which invited the Council to establish a Committee to make the appointment of a Director of Environment and Leisure.

On the proposition of Councillor Birch, seconded by Councillor Ward, it was

RESOLVED that

- (i) the Council determine in accordance with Part 4.8 of the Council's Constitution (Officer Employment Procedure Rules) that the appointment of a "Director of Environment and Leisure" be made from the Council's existing staff; and
- (ii) a committee of seven members (6:1) be established, comprising Councillors Mrs Ballin, Bettison, Edger, McCracken, Mills, Mrs Shillcock and Worrall, (with Councillors Baily, Beadsley and Mrs Hayes as substitute members) to interview the selected candidates and make a final appointment to the post of "Director of Environment and Leisure."

THE MAYOR