

HORWICH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held in the Council Chamber, Public Hall on Monday 13 January 2014 commencing at 7.30pm.

PRESENT: Councillors: C. Root (in the Chair), K. Denton, K. Helsby, J. Kellett, L. McCartin, K. McKeon, L. Rock, S. Rock, R. Silvester, K. Thomson.
Town Clerk: C. Hutchinson
Bolton Ward Councillors present: A. Cunliffe, S. Pickup
1 member of the public

CHAIRPERSON TO OUTLINE THE FIRE SAFETY EVACUATION PROCEDURE:

FG 6044 Councillor Root referred to the procedure that was outlined in the information provided.

TO SUBMIT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND ACCEPT THE REASONS:

FG 6045 Apologies were accepted from Councillor Flanigan due to work commitments, Councillor Morley due to another commitment, Councillor Ramamurthy due to illness and Councillor J. Silvester who was away.

Resolved unanimously resolved to accept the apologies as presented.

TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 DECEMBER 2013:

FG 6046 Resolved unanimously to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 9 December 2013.

TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR ADVISORY COMMITTEE HELD ON 9 DECEMBER 2013:

FG 6047 Resolved unanimously to approve the minutes of the meeting of the First World War Advisory Committee held on 9 December 2013.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

FG 6048 Members welcomed Mrs Lesley Allon, Secretary of Horwich St Mary's Junior Football Club.

Resolved to move out of Committee in order to allow members of the public to speak.

Mrs Allon informed Members that 13 years after initially planning the development of facilities for junior football on Scholes Bank playing fields, funding of over £1M had been secured and work was about to start on the extensive site consisting of clubhouse, car park and new pitches. The club itself had contributed £250,000 in addition to external funding and was now looking to source additional funding of £37,500 from BIFFA for the bottom part of the site. This was to build a land drain to dry up pitches and with professional advice allow remedial work to take place to remove

existing reed beds and shrubbery and plant saplings to make the area more attractive to wildlife. Mrs Allon was asking Horwich Town Council to provide a letter of support for this project as part of the club's application to BIFFA.

In response to a query about use of the new facilities by local adult football clubs, Mrs Allon confirmed that St Mary's JFC were in discussion with Horwich Victoria FC on this matter.

Resolved to return to Committee.

Members were in agreement that they wished to fully support the club in its plans for further development of the site and resolved to provide a letter of support to this effect by 8 votes to 0 with 1 abstention. Mrs Allon was thanked for her attendance.

TO REMIND MEMBERS TO MAKE A DECISION CONCERNING ANY MATTERS TO BE DISCUSSED DURING THE MEETING OF WHICH THEY HAVE AN INTEREST:

FG 6049 None.

TO CONSIDER A QUOTATION FROM RIVINGTON AND ADLINGTON BRASS BAND OF £300 FOR CIVIC SUNDAY ON 1 JUNE 2014 AND £475 FOR REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY ON 9 NOVEMBER 2014:

FG 6050 In response to a query it was confirmed that the cost of the band for Civic Sunday was met from the Town Mayor's allowance. Members felt that the choice of band, if any, was a matter for each individual Mayor, and questioned whether it was worthwhile keeping this tradition now that the Civic Parade no longer took place.

Resolved unanimously to defer a decision on the choice of band for Civic Sunday, following a request from the Deputy Town Mayor.

Resolved unanimously to approve a quotation of £475 for Rivington and Adlington Brass Band for Remembrance Sunday on 9 November 2014.

TO CONSIDER A REQUEST FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM HORWICH FESTIVAL OF RACING FROM THE 2014 – 2015 BUDGET:

FG 6051 Members were in agreement that the Festival of Racing attracted a lot of visitors from outside the area and further afield at the same time as the Carnival attracts local visitors to the town, and should continue to receive support from the Town Council. Some Members were pleased to learn about the proposed skateboard, rollerblade and scooter races, held subject to suitable insurance provision, which would attract young people to the events.

Resolved unanimously to approve grant support of £3,000 to Horwich Festival of Racing from the 2014 – 2015 budget.

TO CONSIDER FORMULATING A RESPONSE TO A RECENT ARTICLE IN THE BOLTON NEWS ABOUT THE VALUE OF TOWN COUNCILS:

FG 6052 Members had expressed their surprise and concern at a recent article in the local press which had questioned the value of town councils, following an opinion expressed by a Member of Bolton Council. It was agreed that it was not widely known that Town Councillors do a lot of work in the community, giving up their time on a voluntary basis, for no financial reward. The Town Council provides good value to council taxpayers through the voluntary contribution of its Members, while encouraging and helping voluntary and community organisations. In addition, the electorate can vote out the Members of the Town Council in an election held every four years, while this opportunity is not available to electors at borough level.

It had been noted that there had been an increase in the number of people turning up at Horwich Town Council meetings to speak on various issues as well as planning, as they feel that Members will take account of their views and pass these on to Bolton Council, where meetings are not usually well attended by the public. The Town Council is also keen to welcome ideas from young people which is important at a time when it appears government in general seems unattractive to them.

The importance of the Localism Act to town and parish councils was referred to, although there were concerns about the inequality of re-distribution of local business rate by central government, which often lead to unreasonable expectations from local businesses who were unaware that town councils do not benefit from business rates.

Some Members felt that following re-organisation of local government, town and parish councils would have a greater role to play in the future and that Horwich Town Council may wish to be more ambitious. Members were in agreement that the best response to this article would be to make sure that its achievements are well publicised through the newsletter and it was noted that funds had been allocated in the budget for 2014 – 2015 to develop the existing newsletter and increase its distribution.

Resolved unanimously not to formulate a response to the recent article in the local press about the value of town councils and to ensure that the Town Council's activities are more widely publicised.

ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT – SCHEDULE ATTACHED:

FG 6053 Resolved unanimously to approve the accounts for payment as presented and totalling £5,831.03

TOWN CLERK’S REPORT – FOR INFORMATION ONLY:

- FG 6054 a. LALC: December 2013 newsletter; LALC Annual Report 2013/2014; Spring Conference 2014 information; Lancs and Merseyside County Training Partnership workshops for 2014
- b. Letter from Horwich Widows: thanks for grant award of £175
- c. Email about from Horwich Heritage: thanks for financial assistance of £1,500 from supported organisations budget
- d. LALC: letter about nomination of Town Mayor in ballot to attend Garden Party in 2014 at Buckingham Palace

Resolved unanimously to note the Town Clerk’s Report.

REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES:

FG 6055 Councillor Kellett reported that she had met with representatives from local adult football teams, a potential site had been identified and negotiations were now ongoing with Bolton Council.

Members were pleased to learn that that Bolton Planning Committee had not given its support to the application for the amendment of conditions for the development of the old Swallowfield Hotel site, with regard to the developer’s reluctance to provide social housing.

TO CONFIRM THE DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING AS 10 FEBRUARY 2014:

FG 6056 Resolved unanimously to confirm the date of the next meeting as 10 February 2014.

The meeting closed at 8.25pm.

Chair.....

Date.....