

HORWICH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held in the Council Chamber, Public Hall on Monday 8 September 2014 commencing at 7.30pm.

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

CHAIR TO OUTLINE FIRE SAFETY EVACUATION PROCEDURE:

FG 6170 Councillor Root outlined the procedure that was outlined in the information provided.

TO SUBMIT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND ACCEPT THE REASONS:

FG 6171 Apologies were accepted from Councillors G. Atkinson, K. Ramaurthy and S. Rock due to work commitments and Councillor L. Rock due to illness. An apology for lateness was received from Councillor Kellett. Resolved unanimously to accept the apologies as presented.

TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 AUGUST 2014:

FG 6172 The Town Clerk referred to minute ref FG 6164 and confirmed that the budget figure included in the income variance column would be amended in the next quarterly budget review. Resolved unanimously to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 11 August 2014.

TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MEETING OF THE GRANTS TO VOLUNTARY GROUPS SUB COMMITTEE HELD ON 21 AUGUST 2014:

FG 6173 Resolved unanimously to approve the minutes and recommendations of the Grants to Voluntary Groups Sub Committee held on 21 August 2014.

TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE JOINT MEETING OF THE STAFFING AND RESOURCE CENTRE SUB COMMITTEES HELD ON 20 JUNE 2014:

FG 6174 Resolved unanimously to approve the minutes and recommendations of the joint meeting of the Staffing and Resource Centre Sub Committees held on 20 June 2014.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

FG 6175 Resolved to move out of Committee to allow members of the public to speak.

Mrs Judith Whalley and Mr David McGee spoke to Members about the challenges faced by the charity Operation Christmas Child which sent

Christmas shoeboxes to children in need overseas. Last year 7,000 shoeboxes were sent from the local area and it was hoped to repeat this success and send a similar amount of shoeboxes to Swaziland in 2014. The organisation required the use of a unit large enough to accommodate up to 20 volunteers at a time checking boxes along with space for storing the shoeboxes for a 4 – 5 week period from the beginning of November. Previous locations used had been Middlebrook and last year St Catherine’s Church but the organisers were still trying to find a location for this year’s appeal.

Resolved to return to Committee

Members thanked both Mrs Whalley and Mr McGee for attending the meeting and drawing this to Council’s attention and were in agreement about the marvellous work done by Operation Christmas Child. The Town Council does not own any buildings and the rear of the Resource Centre was too small and its location unsuitable for this purpose. It was suggested that the organisation investigate the possibility of premises vacated by Blackledge Brewery and it was confirmed that Councillor Root had contacted Middlebrook to establish whether there would be any suitable premises available.

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

FG 6176 None.

TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM MRS BARBARA RONSON ABOUT FAIRTRADE IN HORWICH:

FG 6177 Mrs Ronson and several other members of the Fairtrade Committee were welcomed to the meeting. They hoped it would be possible to revive the partnership between the Town Council and the Fairtrade Committee which had, for various reasons over the past few years, experienced a decrease in involvement from both Town Councillors and staff. There had been difficulties with changing bank signatories and there was a requirement for an AGM so that officers could be appointed and any participation from the Council would be welcomed. It was noted that Councillor Morley was already a member of the Committee and had kindly agreed to act as Treasurer.

It was hoped to re-launch Fairtrade with a Fairtrade party with refreshments and entertainment at St John’s Methodist Church on 21st October at 7.30pm and an invitation was extended to all Members. It was planned to distribute Fairtrade packages at the Horwich in Bloom presentation morning on 13th September to include new leaflets listing local Fairtrade outlets. These leaflets had been partly funded by the grant awarded by the Town Council to the Horwich Fairtrade Group.

Councillor Kellett arrived at this point.

In response to a query it was confirmed that the Horwich Fairtrade Group hoped to join with the Bolton group and re-apply for Fairtrade Town status in 2016. Members agreed that the Town Council could help the Fairtrade Group in a number of different ways, with the most immediate being to advertise the Fairtrade Party in the Council newsletter due out at the beginning of October and that consideration could be given to the involvement of the new member of staff as part of outreach duties. It was suggested that the two high schools could be invited to the re-launch along with all local businesses using Fairtrade products. It was confirmed that invitations would be extended to the Town Mayor and Members of the Town Council to the Fairtrade Party. Members agreed that renewed Council involvement was important to revive the previous partnership and Councillor Morley, as a member of the Fairtrade Group would keep the Town Council informed of developments.

Mrs Ronson and the other members of the Fairtrade Group were thanked for their attendance.

TO CONSIDER A QUOTATION FOR A PENNANT TOWN COUNCIL FLAG:

FG 6178 Members received an update as there appeared to be some confusion on this matter. Following a resolution by Council at the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 11 August (FG 6158) an order had been placed for purchase of a ceremonial flag, pole and carrying equipment at a cost of £341. An additional request for a white gauntlet was noted at this point. As requested, quotations had been obtained for a pennant shaped flag in two sizes to replace the existing flag. A suggestion about a flag outside the Resource Centre would have to be deferred in order to consider the purchase of a flagpole.

As there was general agreement that any decision about the purchase of an additional flag should be deferred until more information about weight and quality of material with a request for photographs of this type of flag. Resolved unanimously to defer a decision regarding the purchase of a replacement flag until Members were in receipt of further information as requested.

TO APPROVE COSTS FOR ASSEMBLY AND DISASSEMBLY OF CHRISTMAS LIGHTING DISPLAYS IN HORWICH TOWN CENTRE FOR 2014 AND ESTIMATED ENERGY COSTS:

FG 6179 Bolton Council had confirmed costs for the Christmas lighting scheme at £6,842. This included cost of erection and dismantling of lights including tree lights at Crown roundabout and Sparrow Park at £6,500, estimated electricity

usage at approximately £210 and a temporary road closure for the tree lighting event on 5th December at £132 with an additional cost of £198 for the hire of the PA system. In response to a query it was confirmed that along with the cost of new lighting displays in Horwich at a cost of £9,475 Bolton Council had also agreed to fund the cost of the connection to the power supply required for the new lights in Sparrow Park at an additional cost of £600. It was also confirmed that the Town Clerk would contact Westhoughton Town Council to request loan of the 'big switch' again this year.

Resolved unanimously to approve the costs for the assembly and disassembly of Christmas lighting displays and estimated energy costs for Christmas lighting scheme in Horwich town centre and costs of temporary road closure and hire of PA system for the lighting of the Civic Christmas Tree service on 5th December as presented at an approximate total cost of £7,040 to Horwich Town Council.

TO CONSIDER APPROVAL OF A CHARGE OF £352.43 FROM BOLTON COUNCIL FOR ELECTRICITY SUPPLY FOR HORWICH TOWN CENTRE CHRISTMAS LIGHTING SCHEME IN 2013:

FG 6180 Members were informed that following receipt of an invoice from Bolton Council, the Town Clerk had been advised that as of last year all Christmas electricity costs were transferred to the Town Councils as part of budget reductions. However there had been no clear instruction received to confirm this until the email dated 3rd September received from the Development and Regeneration Department. There was no record in the minutes of the Town Council approving costs for electricity usage and consequently there had been no order issued to Bolton Council for this purpose. Concern was also expressed that a bill had been sent out nine months after the event and the information provided was insufficient.

Following a lengthy discussion and an initial proposal that the Town Council should refuse to pay these costs, some Members were of the opinion that any decision should be deferred until further information was available. An amendment to this proposal for deferment was proposed and seconded and approved by 6 votes to 4 with 0 abstentions. The original proposal that the Town Council refuse to pay these costs with an approved amendment was approved unanimously.

TO CONSIDER A PROPOSAL FOR DISPLAY OF LIGHTS ON THE TREE AT THE CROWN ROUNDABOUT FOR REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY FOLLOWING CONSULTATION WITH THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION:

FG 6181 Members were in agreement that this was an excellent idea and with the consultation and support of the British Legion would wish to action this suggestion.

Resolved unanimously following consultation with the British Legion in Horwich to investigate the costs and feasibility of displaying lights on the tree at the Crown roundabout for Remembrance Sunday commemorations.

TO APPROVE THE MOTION THAT HORWICH TOWN COUNCIL WRITES TO GMITA AND THE THREE REPRESENTATIVES ON BOLTON COUNCIL TO REQUEST AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF CYCLE LOCKERS AT HORWICH PARKWAY STATION:

FG 6182 Councillor Morley informed Members that following Bolton station becoming a cycle hub a number of cycle lockers would be surplus to requirements and suggested that some could be re-used at Horwich Parkway, encouraging more residents to cycle.

Resolved unanimously to approve the motion that Horwich Town Council writes to GMITA and the three representatives on Bolton Council to request an increase in the number of cycle lockers at Horwich Parkway Station. Councillor Morley confirmed that he would supply all necessary information, including contact details to the Town Clerk.

TO RECEIVE FEEDBACK AND MONITORING INFORMATION FROM ORGANISATIONS IN RECEIPT OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE GRANTS TO VOLUNTARY GROUPS AND CHILD YOUTH GRANTS SCHEME:

FG 6183 It was noted that the issue of feedback and monitoring forms was a new and welcome initiative that enabled Members of the Town Council to see how funding was being spent and how it benefitted the residents of Horwich. All information would be kept in a separate file and available to view on request.

Resolved unanimously to receive the feedback and monitoring information from voluntary and child/youth groups as presented.

ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT – SCHEDULE ATTACHED:

FG 6184 Noted that there was a supplementary account for approval for the Town Mayor's allowance for a donation cheque that had been made out incorrectly to the Town Council for the Town Mayoress's charity evening. Resolved unanimously to approve accounts for payment and supplementary accounts for payment as presented and totalling £8,104.59.

TOWN CLERK'S REPORT – FOR INFORMATION ONLY:

- FG 6185
- a. Horwich Widows Group: thanks for grant of £100.
 - b. Horwich Public Hall Ladies' Bowling Club: thanks for grant of £100.
 - c. Rivington and Blackrod High School: information about World War One project with link to website 'Rivington Remembers'
 - d. LALC Newsletter June 2014.

- e. LALC: invitation to AGM on 8 November 2014.
- f. Information about Town Councils 'Fly a Flag for the Commonwealth 9th March 2015'
- g. Information about Green Deal Communities 'Little Bill' scheme
- h. Email from a Member of the public about the Crown roundabout

Resolved unanimously to note the Town Clerk's Report.

REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES:

FG 6186

Horwich Heritage

Following the successful opening of their World War 1 Exhibition, the Heritage Committee had kindly donated a copy of their new DVD and a copy of a special edition autumn newsletter 'Horwich in the Great War' to the Town Council. These would be kept in the office for any Member to borrow.

Town Mayor

The Town Mayor reported that he had enjoyed his visit to the annual Horwich Fruit, Flower and Vegetable Show on 6th September and thanked Councillor McCartin and the other committee members whose hard work ensured the continuing success of this popular event. The Town Mayoress wished to thank everybody who had supported her Charity Ladies' Evening on 3rd September, which had raised £550 for local Horwich charities. The Town Mayor also reminded Members of their invitation to the World Zombie Day Charity Dinner on 11th October at Bengal Cottage with all proceeds to Bolton Mountain Rescue.

TO CONFIRM THE DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING AS 13 OCTOBER 2014:

FG 6187

Resolved unanimously to confirm the date of the next meeting as 13 October 2014.

The meeting closed at 8.58pm

Chair..... Date.....