

HORWICH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held in the Council Chamber, Public Hall on Monday 11 January 2016 commencing at 7.30pm.

PRESENT: Councillors: C. Root (in the Chair), G. Atkinson, M. Brady, J. Bullock, S. Chadwick, K. Denton, J. Kellett, S. Rock, K. Schofield, P. Wright.
Town Clerk: C. Hutchinson.
Bolton Ward Councillors: A. Cunliffe, S. Pickup.

CHAIR TO OUTLINE FIRE SAFETY EVACUATION PROCEDURE:

FG 6422 Councillor Root outlined the procedure that was outlined in the information provided.

TO SUBMIT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND ACCEPT THE REASONS:

FG 6423 Apologies had been received from Councillor Jarvis due to work commitments, from Councillor Holmes due to illness and from Councillors Allen and McKeon due to ward council commitments. Resolved unanimously to accept the apologies for absence as presented.

TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 DECEMBER 2015:

FG 6424 Resolved unanimously to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2015.

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

FG 6425 None.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT MAY PUT QUESTIONS OR MAKE OBSERVATIONS REGARDING MATTERS IN RELATION TO WHICH THE COUNCIL HAS POWERS OR DUTIES OR WHICH AFFECT THE PARISH. MAXIMUM PERIOD 15 MINUTES:

FG 6426 None.

Councillor Kellett arrived at this point.

TO APPROVE THE DATE FOR CIVIC SUNDAY 2016 AS 15 MAY 2016:

FG 6427 Resolved unanimously to approve the date for Civic Sunday as 15 May 2016.

TO APPROVE APPOINTMENT OF NEW AUDIT REGIME PROCUREMENT SERVICE FOR 2017 – 2018 AS PER THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE LOCAL AUDIT (SMALLER AUTHORITIES) REGULATIONS 2015:

FG 6428 The Town Clerk had provided Members with a summary of the new arrangements for the procurement of audit services for town and parish councils from 2017 – 2018. It is advisable that every council eligible to opt out

needs to formally consider this option. Members were being asked to consider giving their approval to the new arrangements as proposed by the new sector led procurement body.

Resolved unanimously to approve the new audit regime procurement arrangements as proposed by the sector led body and to opt into this option.

TO DISCUSS THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE AND ANY RECOMMENDATION REGARDING HORWICH FAIR TRADE GROUP'S REQUEST FOR SUPPORT, FOLLOWING DEFERRAL FROM THE MEETING OF 7 DECEMBER 2015:

FG 6429 Councillor Wright, as the Council's representative on the Horwich Fairtrade Group informed Members that some of the group were planning to retire and that there would be consideration given to two options, firstly that the Horwich group becomes part of Bolton Fairtrade group and secondly that the group remains local with the possible involvement and/or support of the Horwich Business Alliance. It was confirmed that the Bolton Fairtrade group was still in existence but was also struggling to continue. There was some doubt expressed that members of the Business Alliance would have the time to commit to this initiative, although it was acknowledged that this was not a matter for discussion by Council.

The general view of Members was that while the Council fully supported the principles of Fairtrade and would continue to use Fairtrade products at meetings and official functions, it did not have the resources to become involved in the running of the Fairtrade group. However it would continue to appoint a Councillor as its representative for as long as requested by the Fairtrade Group and although would prefer to see the Fairtrade group remaining local, would respect whatever the members of the group decided to do.

Resolved unanimously that Horwich Town Council writes to Horwich Fairtrade Group to inform them that it continues to fully supports the principles of Fairtrade and if possible would like to see the Fairtrade Group remaining local, while respecting any decision the group may make regarding its future.

FOLLOWING RECEIPT OF BOLTON COUNCIL'S GRITTING STRATEGY, TO DISCUSS A RECOMMENDATION TO REQUEST THE GRITTING OF ADDITIONAL ROADS IN HORWICH AND THAT THE TOWN COUNCIL GIVE CONSIDERATION TO FUNDING FOR ADDITIONAL GRITTING IF REQUIRED:

FG 6430 As requested, a copy of the Highway Winter Service Policy had been made available to all Members. Concerns were expressed at the inadequacy of the gritting process, especially on high risk roads such as Brownlow Road and Ainsworth Avenue in particular. It was confirmed that all bus routes were

regularly gritted when required.

There was also concern at the lack of grit bins at some high risk locations. It was confirmed that some grit bins had been removed due to inappropriate use by some residents for their own driveways.

Some Members strongly expressed the view that the Council should not fund additional gritting in Horwich as this was the responsibility of Bolton Council as the unitary authority and that residents in Horwich should not bear the burden of dual taxation. Other Members were of the opinion that as it was clear from the policy and with the expectation of further budget cuts that it was unlikely Bolton Council would be unable to provide additional gritting services, to the detriment of local residents.

Resolved by 6 votes to 4 to ask Bolton Council to confirm that all grit bins marked in the Winter Service Policy are still in place and in use and to request advice of costings for additional gritting of certain high risk roads, should Horwich Town Council decide that it was able to provide financial support for this initiative, following consideration at a later date.

ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT – SCHEDULE ATTACHED:

FG 6431 Resolved unanimously to approve accounts for payment as presented and totalling £ 5,745.09.

TOWN CLERK'S REPORT – FOR INFORMATION ONLY:

FG 6432

- a. Press release from Poppy Appeal 2015.
- b. LALC Newsletter December 2015.
- c. LALC Annual Report 2014 – 2015.
- d. Horwich Widows: thanks for grant award £250.
- e. Horwich Public Hall Veterans Bowling Club: thanks for grant award £200.

Resolved unanimously to note the Town Clerk's Report.

REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES:

FG 6433 Town Mayor

It was reported that an event to mark the leaving of Reverend Terry Litherland from St Catherine's Church in Horwich had been well attended. The Town Mayor and Mayoress had attended as well as some Members of the Town Council and Terry had been presented with a framed certificate of civic appreciation from Horwich Town Council, in gratitude for his service to the community over many years.

TO CONFIRM THE DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE AS 8 FEBRUARY 2016:

FG 6434 Resolved unanimously to confirm the date of the next meeting of the

Committee as 8 February 2016.

The meeting closed at 8.16 pm.

Chair.....

Date.....