

HORWICH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held in the Council Chamber, Public Hall, Lee Lane, Horwich on Monday 10 October 2016 commencing at 7.30pm

PRESENT: Councillors: C. Root (in the Chair), M. Brady, J. Bullock, S. Chadwick ,
P. Holmes, M. Jarvis, J. Kellett, K. McKeon, S. Rock, K. Schofield, P. Wright
Town Clerk: C. Hutchinson
1 member of the public
1 member of the press

CHAIR TO OUTLINE FIRE SAFETY EVACUATION PROCEDURE:

FG 6547 Councillor Root outlined the procedure from the information provided.

TO SUBMIT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND ACCEPT THE REASONS:

FG 6548 Resolved to accept apologies from Councillor Atkinson as presented and an apology for lateness was accepted from Councillor McKeon.

TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 SEPTEMBER 2016:

FG 6549 Resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2016.

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

FG 6550 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 6551 None.

TO APPROVE THE LOCAL COUNCILS IN ENGLAND RETURN FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2016 AND NOTE ACCOMPANYING REPORT:

FG 6552 Council had received the external auditor's certificate and report on issues arising report for the financial year ended 31 March 2016 with no matters for attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and requirements have not been met. Action has been taken in response to minor issues arising which were raised as a result of the Town Council and Resource Centre being audited as a single entity rather than two separate ones from 1 April 2015. External audit had reviewed the necessary adjustments made and were satisfied that they were correct. £1 difference in Section 2 was also noted.

Resolved to approve the Local Councils in England Return for the financial year ended 31 March 2016 and note the accompanying Issues Arising Report.

TO APPROVE THE COSTS FOR CHRISTMAS LIGHTING DISPLAYS FOR 2016/2017 IN HORWICH TOWN CENTRE INCLUDING ASSEMBLY/DISASSEMBLY BY BOLTON COUNCIL AT A COST OF £6,500, APPROXIMATE ENERGY COSTS OF £100 AND TEMPORARY TRAFFIC DIVERSION AT A COST OF £163 FOR THE LIGHTING OF THE CIVIC CHRISTMAS TREE AND CAROL SERVICE ON FRIDAY 2 DECEMBER 2017:

FG 6553 Members were informed that the cost of assembly/disassembly of the Christmas lighting displays had remained static over the past five years and that Bolton Council supplied the lighting displays. Energy costs had been estimated on last year's figure of £60 and it was noted that these had reduced considerably over the last two years following the use of the new LED lighting displays. The Town Clerk had been advised that the cost of the temporary traffic diversion was estimated at last year's cost plus 3%.

Resolved to approve the costs for Christmas lighting displays for 2016/2017 in Horwich Town Centre including assembly/disassembly by Bolton Council at a cost of £6,500, approximate energy costs of £100 and temporary traffic diversion at a cost of £163 for the lighting of the Civic Christmas tree and carol service on Friday 2 December 2017.

TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE INCLUDING RESPONSES FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND WARD COUNCILLORS ON THE PROPOSED CLOSURE OF THE ACCESS POINT AT HORWICH POLICE STATION AT MIDDLEBROOK AND DISCUSS FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS:

FG 6554 It was noted that both Councillor Rock and the Town Clerk had written to GMP in early September and were still awaiting a response from the Chief Inspector. Members were informed that emails had been sent to the Police Commissioner for Greater Manchester and GMP by several Ward Councillors and the Leader of the Town Council, Councillor Joyce Kellett.

Members expressed great concern at the proposed closure of the public counter at Middlebrook police station and were extremely critical of the inaccessibility of its location for many residents who were elderly or had to use public transport to get there. The location had clearly caused problems which had been reflected in its lack of use, Members agreed that it should be located in a more prominent position in the heart of the community.

Councillor McKeon arrived at this point.

While fully aware of and sympathetic to the cutbacks that had affected police resources generally in many metropolitan areas, Members expressed the view that it was absolutely imperative that the police maintain a presence in Horwich for the benefit of both residents and businesses, particularly in view of plans to build over 2,000 new homes in the Horwich and Blackrod area within the next few years.

It was suggested that there were several suitable locations in Horwich that could support a police counter service, in particular at the Public Hall where local PCSOs were already based.

Following discussion it was resolved firstly to record thanks to the Ward Councillors for their efforts on this issue and secondly it was resolved that Council draft a letter to GMP and the Police Commissioner in support of maintaining a police presence accessible to the public in Horwich and this to be circulated to all Members for comment before it was sent out.

ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT – SCHEDULE ATTACHED:

FG 6555 Resolved to approve the accounts for payment as presented and amounting to £5,907.28.

TOWN CLERK'S REPORT – FOR INFORMATION ONLY:

- FG 6556
- a. NALC: consultation on council tax referendum proposals.
 - b. LALC: newsletter September 2016.
 - c. Post Office: Blackrod Post Office – proposed move to new premises and branch modernisation.
 - d. Monitoring/feedback forms and accompanying information on grant awards to Horwich Breakaway Club and St Catherine's Church.
 - e. CPRE Lancashire, Greater Manchester and Merseyside: invitation to guided heritage garden walk at Rivington Terraced Gardens on Wednesday 19 October 2016.

Resolved to note the Town Clerk's Report as presented.

REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES:

FG 6557 None.

IN VIEW OF THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE BUSINESS ABOUT TO BE TRANSACTED IT IS ADVISABLE IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST THAT THE PRESS AND PUBLIC ARE TEMPORARILY EXCUSED AND IF PRESENT ARE ASKED TO WITHDRAW.