

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 14 November 2016 commencing at 7.30pm

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

CHAIR TO OUTLINE FIRE SAFETY EVACUATION PROCEDURE:

FG 6561 Councillor Root outlined the procedure from the information provided.

TO SUBMIT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND ACCEPT THE REASONS:

FG 6562 Resolved to accept apologies from Councillors Denton, Jarvis and McKeon as presented.

On behalf of all Members Councillor Kellett, as Leader of the Council, congratulated Councillor Graham on his recent election win in Claypool Ward and welcomed him to the Town Council.

TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10 OCTOBER 2016:

FG 6563 Resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2016.

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

FG 6564 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 6565 None.

TO APPROVE THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MEETING OF THE GRANTS TO VOLUNTARY GROUPS SUB COMMITTEE HELD ON 20 OCTOBER 2016:

FG 6566 Resolved to approve the recommendations of the meeting of the Grants to Voluntary Groups Sub Committee held on 20 October 2016.

TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE HORWICH IN BLOOM ADVISORY COMMITTEE HELD ON 12 OCTOBER 2016:

FG 6567 Resolved to note the minutes of the Horwich in Bloom Advisory Committee held on 12 October 2016.

TO APPROVE THE STATEMENT OF QUARTERLY ACCOUNTS TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2016:

FG 6568 Resolved to approve the statement of quarterly accounts to 30 September 2016.

TO APPROVE THE QUARTERLY BUDGET REVIEW TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2016:

FG 6569 Resolved to approve the quarterly budget review to 30 September 2016.

TO APPROVE THE QUARTERLY REPORT FROM INTERNAL AUDIT TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2016:

FG 6570 Resolved to approve the quarterly report from internal audit to 30 September 2016.

TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE PROPOSED CLOSURE OF THE ACCESS POINT AT HORWICH POLICE STATION AT MIDDLEBROOK:

FG 6571 Council was in receipt of an acknowledgement from the Police Commissioner in response to its letter raising concerns about the proposed closure of the police access point. The matter had been passed to the Deputy Commissioner for his attention regarding the issues raised.

Resolved that this is acknowledged and if there had been no response by 5 December Council to request a response in time for the next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 12 December.

TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM COUNCILLOR SCHOFIELD ON THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE 518 BUS SERVICE AND DISCUSS ANY FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS:

FG 6572 Councillor Schofield gave an update on proposed changes to this service by TfGM following representations from residents and Councillors.

Councillor Root informed Members that Councillor McKeon had been in contact with a representative from Transport for Greater Manchester who had agreed to attend a forthcoming Council meeting to provide an update and answer any questions.

Resolved to congratulate Councillor Schofield and other Brazley residents for all of their hard work on this issue and that Members to prepare questions to be collated and presented to the representative from TfGM prior to his attendance at Council.

TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE PROPOSAL FOR A FREE STANDING FLAG POLE AT THE PUBLIC HALL:

FG 6573 Bolton Council had informed the Town Clerk that due to time constraints associated with planning it had not been possible to allow a flag pole on the green at the side of the Public Hall in time for Remembrance commemorations. However it was felt that this was not the most suitable location due to lack of space, radius, the proximity of a large, well

established tree along with health and safety issues. It had been suggested that the grass verge in the Garden of Remembrance on Lever Park Avenue overlooking Scholes Bank might be a more suitable location.

Costs had been estimated at £1,800 for the flag pole, £200 for a heavy duty union flag and £300 for planning permission administration. Bolton Council were giving consideration to funding it, further updates to follow.

TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE PROPOSED VISIT BY CROWBOROUGH TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB TO HORWICH ST MARY'S JUNIOR FOOTBALL CLUB:

FG 6574 The Town Clerk informed Members that she had been contacted by Mike Noble, a representative from Crowborough Town FC who are looking at visiting Horwich on the weekend of late spring bank holiday in 2017. The club originally played against Horwich RMI at Grundy Hill back in 1992 and would now like to repeat the exercise to celebrate 25 years since the first game.

Mike has looked at the options of teams with the Horwich name and there are two, Horwich RMI and Horwich St Mary's JFC. After contacting the Lancashire Football Association, Mike contacted Lesley Allon, the secretary of St Mary's JFC. Lesley has confirmed that the club would be prepared to host a football match with Crowborough FC at their Scholes Bank ground followed by a buffet and reception in the clubhouse. It had been noted that financial assistance was available through the Council's twinning budget, but it was expected that this would not be necessary.

Members agreed that this was an excellent idea and it was suggested that the Council may wish to consider using funds from the twinning budget to donate a trophy to the winners of the match and hoped that this would become a regular fixture for both towns. It was hoped that this may lead to other sporting events being arranged as part of future twinning activity.

TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS RECEIVED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL:

FG 6575 The Town Clerk updated Members on a series of FOI requests that had been received by Council within the last two months. Three had been received during September and October with a fourth received on 14 November. All had been dealt with at a considerable cost to staff time. A total of 10 hours staff time had been spent on one request trying to establish exactly what information was required. The opportunity to view the information at the Town Council Office had been declined and hard copies requested. It had been estimated that the cost of staff time spent on responding to these series of requests was in excess of £300. In response to a query it was

confirmed that the Council was legally obliged to respond to FOI requests.

Some Members expressed the view that consideration should be given to taking legal advice as to whether the requests were vexatious. The requests had been made by individuals associated with the Horwich First group. Members felt that this had become an unacceptable and unnecessary drain on staff resource, time and consequently, public money. This would be better spent on the many voluntary and community groups who serve the whole community, some of who had attended the grant presentation event before the start of the meeting. It was resolved to ask the Town Clerk to keep a record of staff time had been taken up by FOI requests, to be reported back to Council at the end of the financial year and to thank the Town Clerk and other staff for their professionalism in dealing with this matter.

ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT – SCHEDULE ATTACHED:

FG 6576 Resolved to approve the accounts for payment as presented and amounting to £ 8,296.18.

TOWN CLERK'S REPORT – FOR INFORMATION ONLY:

- FG 6577
- a. Grant monitoring forms: 6th Horwich Scout Troop and Horwich Rounders Club.
 - b. Licensing Authority North Western Area Applications for HGV Operators' Licences: Horwich Moor Farm, Matchmoor Lane.
 - c. Bolton Community Leisure: new Horwich Leisure Centre development November newsletter
 - d. Bolton West Stroke Association: invitation to Town mayor and Members of the Council to 'End of Year Christmas Party' at Horwich Community Centre on 1st December 2016.

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

REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES:

FG 6578 Neighbourhood Plan

It was reported that an initial meeting was being held on the evening of 28 November at Horwich Community Centre for residents who had expressed an interest in forming an NP steering group. The meeting will explain in further detail what an NP includes and the substantial amount of work and time involved. An invitation was also extended to any Councillors who were interested in attending. It was expected to present a further update at the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting on 12 December.

Deputy Town Mayor

Councillor Rock reported on an event that he had recently attended at

a local sheltered housing scheme where several residents had raised funds for a cancer research charity with a sponsored 'head shave'.

Remembrance Commemoration

The Town Mayor thanked everyone who had attended recent Remembrance events and that this was a good reflection on the community of Horwich.

Horwich Festival of Music

Councillor Root informed Members that dates for the Festival in 2017 had been booked for 4/5/6 May at Horwich Community Centre. More detail would be brought to the Community Centre Sub Committee at its next meeting on 2 December.

TO APPROVE THE DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE AS 12 DECEMBER 2016:
FG 6579

Resolved to approve the date of the next meeting of the Committee as 12 December 2016.

The meeting closed at 8.19 pm.

Chair.....

Date.....