

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 15 January 2018 commencing at 7.30pm

PRESENT: Councillors: C. Root (in the Chair), M. Brady, J. Bullock, S. Chadwick, K. Denton, R. Graham, J. Kellett, K. McKeon, S. Rock, G. Stone.
Town Clerk, C. Hutchinson.

DEPUTY CHAIR TO OUTLINE FIRE SAFETY EVACUATION PROCEDURE:

FG 6768 Councillor Root outlined the procedure from the information provided.

TO SUBMIT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND ACCEPT THE REASONS:

FG 6769 Resolved to accept apologies for absence from Councillors Holmes, Jarvis and Wright as presented.

TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 11 DECEMBER 2017:

FG 6770 Resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 11 December 2017.

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

FG 6771 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 6772 None.

TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON AND DISCUSS THE PROBLEM OF ANTI-SOCIAL ACTIVITY IN HORWICH TOWN CENTRE:

FG 6773 Following an increase in incidents of anti-social behaviour in the town centre the Town Clerk contacted Sharon Pendlebury from Bolton Council Community Safety Team who responded with an update on a number of measures that had been put in place by several different agencies as detailed in a report that had been circulated to all Members. Sharon had agreed to attend F & G P in February to provide a further update and answer Members' queries. Members were also informed that Councillor Cunliffe had contacted the police to arrange a meeting with Horwich residents to discuss these issues.

Members raised their concerns about various incidents of ASB that had taken place in Horwich. It was reported that the Town Council's street cleaner Peter Healey had recently removed a large number of used needles from

Captain Street car park and these had been collected by Bolton Council's sharps disposal team. Advice had been received about training and it was confirmed that a risk assessment would be carried out.

The Council resolved to record its thanks to Peter Healey for dealing with this matter.

The problem of public drug use was discussed with an acknowledgement that the police priority was to arrest the dealers. There was also concern about the emergence of vigilante activity following recent posts on social media. It was noted that it was not the role of the Council to get involved and that the advice given should always be to contact the police. The issue of a zero tolerance approach was discussed along with the problem of lack of police numbers.

However some Members thought that it was important to recognise that Horwich was a low crime area and that only a minority of young people had been involved in ASB and were not representative of Horwich youth.

Following further discussion it was resolved that Council put the following questions to Sharon Pendlebury prior to her attendance at the next meeting on 12 February 2018:

- Can the police provide reassurance that they have dealt/are dealing with this problem and the small minority of offenders?
- Is there anything that either the Council or the community can do to help the police?
- Is there a continuing upward trend in incidents of ASB in Horwich?
- Are the recent incidents of ASB connected to increased drug use in view of the discovery of used needles by a member of the Town Council staff?

TO DISCUSS AND MAKE A RECOMMENDATION ON OPTIONS FOR THE REMOVAL AND RE-SITING OF THE TWO CELEBRATION BENCHES OUTSIDE THE PUBLIC HALL:

FG 6774 Members had received a report proposing three possible options for the future of the two Celebration benches outside the Public Hall following recurring vandalism. There was general agreement that the benches should remain in their present location so that the whole community could enjoy their benefits, however there was concern about the siting of one of the benches which had been hidden from view by overhanging tree branches from the nearby nursing home which made it more prone to vandalism. It was noted that payment for paint and materials had already been authorised at a cost of under £500 which was more financially acceptable than the proposed costs quoted for moving the benches to another location.

However Members were presented with new information that suggested the nearby tree cover had recently been removed. In view of this it was resolved to approve the second option and continue to keep the benches in their current location and continue to maintain them and monitor on a regular basis.

ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT – SCHEDULE ATTACHED:

FG 6775 Resolved to approve the accounts for payment as presented and amounting to £3,100.71

TOWN CLERKS REPORT – FOR INFORMATION ONLY:

- FG 6776
- a. GM Police and Crime Plan: public consultation.
 - b. Grant monitoring/feedback forms from SSAFA Forces Help and St Elizabeth's Church.
 - c. LALC: December 2017 newsletter.
 - d. Horwich Festival of Racing: thank you letter for grant funding of £3,000 for Festival of Racing events 10 June to 17 June 2018.
 - e. LALC: Lancashire County Council January 2018 Consumer/Trading Alerts.
 - f. LALC: invitation to nominate the Town Mayor for the LALC ballot to attend the Buckingham Palace Garden Party on 5 June 2018.

While acknowledging data protection issues it was noted to request information on work done specifically in Horwich for any future application from SSAFA. Resolved to note the Town Clerk's Report as presented.

REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES:

FG 6777 Town Mayor

The Mayor reported that he had been very busy over the festive period attending many events and he was proud to have been able to help some of the many voluntary groups that Horwich is so fortunate to have. The New Year had started with an event in Blackburn organised by the Showman's Guild of Great Britain, a national organisation that does a great deal of charity work. There were 37 Mayors present at this event with the Town Mayor of Horwich the only representative from smaller town councils.

TO APPROVE THE DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE AS 12 FEBRUARY 2018:

FG 6778 Resolved to approve the date of the next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee as 12 February 2018.

The meeting closed at 8.29 pm.

CHAIR..... DATE.....