

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 May 2018 commencing at 7.30pm

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

CHAIR TO OUTLINE FIRE SAFETY EVACUATION PROCEDURE:

FG 6827 Councillor Root outlined the procedure from the information provided.

TO SUBMIT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND ACCEPT THE REASONS:

FG 6828 Resolved to accept apologies for absence from Councillors Carruthers, Denton, Jarvis, Stone and Wright.

TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 9 APRIL 2018:

FG 6829 Resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 9 April 2018.

TO RECEIVE A REPORT AND UPDATE ON RECOMMENDATIONS AND OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF GREEN LANE PLAYING FIELDS TO ALLOW COUNCIL TO MAKE A DECISION ON THE FEASIBILITY OF TAKING OVER THE MANAGEMENT OF THE PLAYING FIELDS:

FG 6830 Following information received from the Department of Neighbourhood Services Members resolved to postpone this matter for discussion at the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 11 June when it was hoped that the relevant information would be available.

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 6833 Resolved to move out of Committee to allow a member of the public to speak.

Councillor Richard Silvester informed Members of complaints that he had received in his capacity as Borough Ward Councillor for Horwich North East regarding the conduct of the Town Mayor for 2017 – 2018, Councillor Steve Rock. Councillor Silvester referred to the Declaration of Acceptance of Office which every Town Mayor signs and undertakes to observe on taking office. This states that the Town Mayor should not use the office to further his or her personal objectives and that the role of the Town Mayor is a non political one. Members were shown a Liberal Democrat election leaflet aimed at postal voters which had been part of Councillor Rock's campaign for the borough election. The leaflet had a photograph of Councillor Rock attending

wearing the chain at a mayoral event and Councillor Silvester informed Members that this was a clear breach of the Code of Conduct which was an integral part of the Declaration of Acceptance of Office. Councillor Silvester had referred this matter to the Town Clerk who had confirmed that she would speak to Councillor Rock. Councillor Silvester then was informed by the Town Clerk that she had discussed this matter with Councillor Rock who had explained that by the time he had become aware that the photograph had been used, the leaflet had already gone to press and it was too late to amend it and offered his apologies for this oversight. However Councillor Silvester informed Members that shortly after this a new leaflet was delivered to ballot box voters which included some changes but still featured the photograph of Councillor Rock wearing the mayoral chain and one of these leaflets had been passed to him by a local resident who had complained about this. Councillor Silvester informed Members that in his opinion Councillor Rock had breached the Code of Conduct on three occasions by the use of the photograph of him wearing the mayoral chain on two separate election campaign leaflet and also on social media.

Resolved to move back into Committee.

In response Councillor Rock stated that he had not known that the photograph was being included in the leaflet at the time of going to press and that it simply stated that he was Town Mayor of Horwich. Councillor Rock informed Members that Councillor Silvester had acted in the same manner when he was Town Mayor. Councillor Silvester was thanked for his attendance and advised that should he wish to take this matter further then it should be taken up with the Monitoring Officer as a formal complaint.

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

FG 6833 None.

TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HORWICH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP HELD ON 3 APRIL 2018:

FG 6834 It was reported that progress was ongoing with a public meeting arranged on 23 May at Horwich RMI Club. There had been a good response to the promotional event on a Day for St George on 21 April when leaflets had been given out to members of the public. While there were some concern about the representation of the educational element of the plan and a query about protected areas in the plan it was expected that these would be addressed in due course. Resolved to receive the minutes of the meeting of the Horwich Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group held on 3 April 2018.

TO RECEIVE THE NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE END OF WORLD WAR 1 COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON 16 APRIL 2018:

FG 6835 There was some concern expressed about the proposal to install a new memorial above the entrance doors to the Hall at the Community Centre as this had not been communicated to the Centre Sub Committee for a formal decision before a design had been commissioned. The Sub Committee had recently approved extensive refurbishment of the Centre as part of a regeneration strategy to include more activities for younger people but were disappointed that there had been no opportunity to discuss the appropriateness of the proposed war memorial. The Town Clerk informed Members that as part of the plans for the refurbishment of the Saddlery in 2016 there had been a suggestion to commission a mural on the corridor wall of a First World War soldier leading a horse towards the Saddlery but the cost had proved prohibitive, although it had been agreed that this was a suitable location. Resolved to receive the notes of the meeting of the End of World War 1 Committee held on 16 April 2018 and that the Council's representatives raise the matter of the proposed war memorial at the next meeting of the Committee on 15 May 2018.

ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT – SCHEDULE ATTACHED:

FG 6836 Resolved to approve the accounts for payment as presented and amounting to £28,486.18.

TOWN CLERKS REPORT – FOR INFORMATION ONLY:

- FG 6837
- a. Horwich Heritage: email regarding work to upgrade the Stocks
 - b. Horwich Means Business: feedback form for grant award of £250 in November 2017.
 - c. LALC: New Councillors and Clerks Workshops 14 and 21 July 2018.

The Town Clerk's Report was noted.

REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES:

FG 6823 Town Mayor
The Town Mayor reported that he had recently enjoyed attending Horwich Music Festival which had been the last event in his Mayoral year of office. He had gone to several events, all of which had been very well attended and encouraged other Members to attend and support this marvellous event. Thanks to Councillor Root and the members of the Music Festival Committee for their hard work on this event were noted.

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 SHOULD BE TEMPORARILY EXCLUDED AND IF PRESENT ASKED TO WITHDRAW.