

Main issues covered: Youth Civic Awards/ Presentation to Mrs Adamson/ Civic Hall and Library Project/ Rural Funding/ Minutes of Standing Committees

MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT 8.00PM ON MONDAY 16TH SEPTEMBER 2013 IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC HALL, POYNTON.

PRESENT

Chairman: Town Mayor Cllr G Bartos

Cllrs. M Beanland, L A Clarke, C Gorst, I Hollingworth, Mrs S Horsman, G King, B Lewis, H Murray, A Smith, G Smith and Mrs I Thornton-Maddocks

Also in attendance were Paul Bayley and Alan Jackson from Cheshire East, together with a representative from Bowker Sadler, architects.

37. Questions to the Mayor

There were no questions to the Mayor.

38. Apologies for absence

Cllrs. Ms R Horsman, P Hoyland, Mrs J Saunders, Mrs J Sewart, M C G Sewart, and R E West

39. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Other Interests

None

40. Youth Civic Award

There was a presentation by the Town Mayor of a 2013 Youth Civic Award certificate and lapel pin to Rob Westmancoat, who was accompanied by his parents. The Clerk read out the citation, which detailed various activities that Rob has been involved in.

41. Presentation to Mrs Sue Adamson

There followed a presentation by the Town Mayor on behalf of Poynton Town Council to Mrs Sue Adamson, former Headteacher at Poynton High School, in recognition of her 36 years of loyal service and commitment to Poynton High School and Performing Arts College.

Sue Adamson thanked the Town Council for the presentation of a watercolour of Fountain Place by local artist Chris Beard, and two complimentary tickets to the Civic Ball. She said she felt fortunate to have worked in such a special place which has a great community spirit. She thanked the school's Governing Body and the community for all their enduring support.

42. Civic Hall/Library Project

On the proposed merger of the Civic Hall and Library buildings, the Town Council members were provided with an updated report from the Working Group, and a slide pack including the various layout options.

The Clerk explained that Cllr Mrs Sewart was unable to attend this meeting due to ill health. She had compiled the report presented to members. The Working Group were recommending option 4 as the preferred design. This is the option that is considered as providing the most efficient building in terms of a staff area separated from the public area. The costs for this as well as the other options were included in the report.

Cllr Lewis enquired about the contingency as mentioned under item 5. He asked how much of this contingency the Town Council would be liable for? The Clerk said that he understood that the prices given already included these elements.

Cllr Murray asked if the 10% contingency would be returned if unspent. Paul Bayley from Cheshire East clarified that if none of the contingency is required then the invoice submitted to the Town Council would reflect this. Cllr Lewis confirmed that this means that the Town Council would just pay 10% less.

Cllr Lewis explained that the Town Council is being asked to underwrite a minimum of £237,000 and asked if the Town Council was prepared to do this. He asked if the Town Council should revert instead to the original proposal of refurbishing the existing reception area with the £28,500 originally offered by Cheshire East?

In terms of the finances, the Clerk explained that the accountant will be at the Town Council in late October examining the accounts and setting out a preliminary budget for next year. We will then be able to provide a better idea of the precept proposed and of any surpluses to be carried forward into the reserves. The Clerk has discussed with Cllr Gorst that if there are insufficient reserves after these monies have been committed then the Town Council could consider a loan from the Public Works Loan Board.

Cllr Gorst explained that the cost of replacing the roof is between £55,000 and £74,000. Over the years, a reserve for this work has been accrued which currently stands at £74,000 to cover this cost. The estimated cost for the Civic Hall work is £117,000, plus a Town Council contribution of £40,000 towards the main project and c.£20,000 for fitting out. There is currently a sum of £135,000 in the Rolling Capital Programme Fund (RCPF), plus a further

£25,000 built into the precept as a reserve top-up. This would leave a shortfall of c.£17,000. This can be taken as a loan. Cllr Gorst explained that the RCPF has been in large part created by the double taxation refunds over a period of years. This investment in the Civic Hall would be of benefit to the village, and the Civic Hall is the Town Council's main and most valuable asset. Cllr Gorst reminded members that no significant capital work has been carried out on this building since it was first built in the late 1960s. This would bring the Civic Hall up to modern standards, with a very attractive reception area and amalgamate the Library and the Civic Hall with an up to date information centre, also providing public toilet facilities and a suite of modern meeting rooms which could generate more revenue in the future.

Cllr Murray asked for clarification on the decision the Town Council were being asked to make or note this evening. Cllr Lewis said that he had understood that this Town Council had previously agreed that there would be no decision on this matter until architects' plans as they would go before the Planning Committee, and a fully-costed budget were received.

The Clerk read the proposal submitted by the Chairman of the Working Group, Cllr Mrs Sewart to be considered at this meeting, namely

"That this Council accepts Option 4 as the design for the Library/Civic Hall Project at a total cost of £350,757, with the Town Council's commitment being £117,000 for the Civic Hall works, plus the Town Council's contribution towards the new entrance of £40,000, and the estimated cost of £60,000 for the Civic Hall roof renewal, with the latter expenditure being a necessity, regardless of the main project".

Cllr Murray said that it was unfortunate because not all Councillors were present, and they were not aware that there was an intention to consider this proposal.

Cllr Gorst suggested that at this stage Members should either give the go ahead to make further progress on this issue, and give an agreement in principle, or alternatively decide not to proceed. Cllr Clarke stated that an agreement in principle did not mean an agreement to go ahead.

RESOLVED: That a brief from the Civic Hall Working Group on the proposed merger of the Civic Hall and Library buildings is received, and that there is agreement in principle for this project to be taken forward (10 - 2 against)

The Clerk asked for clarification on how this would be taken forward. He suggested that this item goes to the FIED Committee and recommendations then taken to the full Town Council.

Cllr Murray asked how this would proceed at the planning permission stage, given the Town Council's involvement. Cllr Clarke said he would ask the Clerk to take advice from the Planning Dept at Cheshire East, which the Clerk agreed to do.

The Mayor thanked the visitors from Cheshire East and Bowker Sadler for attending.

43. Petition on Rural Funding

Cllr Clarke proposed that the request from CE Cllr Rachel Bailey to sign a petition on rural funding, organised by the cross-party "Rural Fair Share" campaign is received and any member who wishes to sign may do so, it is not compulsory to sign it. The Clerk explained that the deadline for submission of petitions is 25th September 2013.

RESOLVED: That details of the petition on rural funding are received, and that it is for individual Members to respond if they so wish (NC)

44. Previous Town Council Minutes of 29th July 2013

In respect of the resolution concerning the Neighbourhood Plan Cllr Clarke asked whether information about the composition of the NP panel had been obtained. The Clerk said that there had been no move to form such a panel to date.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 29th July 2013 be approved as an accurate record and signed by the Mayor (10 – 2abs)

45. Mayor's announcements

See attached.

RESOLVED: That the Mayor's announcements are received (NC)

46. Minutes of the Standing Committees

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Management and Establishment meeting held on 25th June 2013 be received and adopted (11 - 1 abs)

The Clerk confirmed to Cllr Clarke that the name of the PCSO had been removed from the master copy of the COPS record of 1st July 2013. Cllr Bartos asked about the collation of a private CCTV database. The Clerk confirmed that there is now such a database in place, as actioned by Sgt Adam Alexander.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the COPS meeting held on 1st July 2013 be received and adopted (11 – 1 abs)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the FIED meeting held on 8th July 2013 be received and adopted (NC)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning and Environment meeting held on 15th July 2013 be received and adopted (11 for 1 against)

Cllr Lewis noted that although he is included on the membership of the Planning Committee he had never been asked to serve on it and nor had he agreed to either. He said that without his permission he cannot be on this Committee. He requested therefore that the minutes of these meetings be corrected from the beginning of the civic year. Cllr Clarke explained that at the Annual Town Council meeting in May the Town Council had passed a resolution to establish the composition of the Standing Committees, and although Cllr Lewis was not present at that meeting his name was included on the Planning Committee. Cllr Clarke said he very much hoped Cllr Lewis would attend and join their meetings. Cllr Clarke added that if Cllr Lewis wanted his name to be removed, then the process was to request an agenda item at a future full Town Council meeting to consider removing him from the Planning Committee.

Cllr Lewis said it was unconstitutional to add him to the Planning Committee without being asked. Cllr Murray said it was regrettable that Cllr Lewis did not want to be on the Planning Committee. The Mayor asked Cllr Lewis to send an e-mail if he would like this included as an agenda item at a future Town Council meeting.

The meeting concluded at 8.45 pm