

MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT 8.00PM ON MONDAY 25TH MARCH 2013 IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC HALL, POYNTON.

PRESENT

Chairman: Cllr Mrs S Horsman

Cllrs. G Bartos, M Beanland, L A Clarke, C Gorst, I Hollingworth, Ms R Horsman, P Hoyland, G King, B Lewis, H Murray, Mrs J Saunders, A Smith, G Smith, Mrs I Thornton-Maddocks and R E West

PART A

94. In Memory of Les Burridge

The Mayor led a two minute silence in memory of Les Burridge, ex-Parish Councillor and Chairman of the Parish Council in the year 2000, who sadly passed away earlier this year. The Clerk confirmed that he has prepared a letter to be signed by the Mayor which will be sent to the next of kin.

95. Questions to the Mayor

None

96. Apologies for absence

Cllrs. Mrs J Sewart and M C G Sewart

97. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Other Interests, or requests for dispensation

None

98. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 18th February 2013

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 18th February 2013 be approved as an accurate record and signed by the Mayor (15 – 1 abs)

99. Mayor's Announcements

These are available from the Clerk.

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

100. Minutes of the Standing Committees

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Management and Establishment Committee meeting held on 11th December 2012 be received and adopted (15 – 1 abs)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes meeting held on 7th January 2013 be received and adopted (15 – 1 abs)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Community, Order and Public Safety meeting held on 28th January 2013 be received and adopted (15 – 1 abs)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Facilities, Infrastructure and Econ. Development meeting held on 4th February 2013 be received and adopted (15 – 1 abs)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning and Environment meeting held on 11th February 2013 be received and adopted (15 – 1 abs)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Community, Order and Public Safety meeting held on 25th February 2013 be received and adopted (15 – 1 abs)

101. Town Council's Standing Orders

The Clerk explained that the Town Council's Standing Orders are reviewed on a regular basis by a Working Group. In the most recent review the Group met on the 26th February 2013 and recommended a number of amendments and revisions - these are sidelined in the draft document circulated to members. The Clerk then expanded on each of the highlighted points.

Cllr Clarke noted that SO53 duplicates SO1 and can therefore be removed and the paragraph left blank.

Cllr Hoyland proposed that the revised Standing Orders and Regulations plus the appendices, with the addition of the Town Council's Internal Complaints Procedure as Appendix C are accepted and adopted as a complete document for the management of the Town Council's business.

Cllr Lewis asked who the Chairman of the Council was, as referred to in SOs 4 and 5. Should this not refer instead to the Mayor? Cllr Murray pointed out that these Standing Orders are in bold and this indicates that they are a direct lift from the Local Government Act 1972. These are statutory, and as such the wording cannot be altered. Cllr Lewis suggested that therefore there should be something at the start of the document to state that the Mayor is also the Chairman. Cllr Clarke clarified that this is already indicated in SO8 and SO15a covers this requirement too. Cllr Lewis said that for good governance this should be introduced before SOs 4 and 5 to make it clear. Cllr Mrs Saunders seconded Cllr Hoyland's proposal.

RESOLVED: That the amendments to the Town Council's Standing Orders, as recommended by M&E, plus inclusion of the Internal Complaints Procedure as Appendix C, are accepted and approved (15 – 1 abs)

102. Town Council's Financial Standing Orders

The Clerk explained that the Financial Regulations have been reviewed and approved under SO48 (now SO 51), with very few changes. It was felt prudent to make those changes in advance of the forthcoming internal and external audits of the FY 2012/13. Cllr Gorst proposed that the amendments as recommended by F&GP are approved.

RESOLVED: That the amendments to the Town Council's Financial Standing Orders, as recommended by F&GP, are approved (15 – 1 abs)

103. Internal Controls and Risk Management Assessment for 2013

The Clerk explained that the Town Council has a new external auditor, BDO, following the demise of the Audit Commission. The Town Council will be responsible for submitting their Annual Return for 2012/13 for BDO's scrutiny. They have recently brought to the Council's attention the requirement for the full Town Council to review the effectiveness of their internal controls including the management of risk. This needs to be reviewed before the 31st March 2013. The Internal Auditor will be signing off an Internal Audit report as part of the Annual Return, but this will not be until mid-April 2013. The annual Governance Statement will also be presented at the Annual Town Council meeting in May 2013, and if satisfactory, it will be signed by the Mayor. Meanwhile there is a requirement for the Town Council to state that it has reviewed the internal controls and in order to support that, the Clerk has updated the Risk Management Assessment for 2013 to demonstrate adequate internal controls to prevent fraud, and good governance.

As Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, Cllr Gorst confirmed that, as stated by the Clerk, every year the Internal Auditor reviews and tests the Town Council's internal controls and then presents a certificate which is signed off. The last of these was submitted in May 2012 to cover the

FY 2011/12, so the internal controls have been assessed this year - this is more of a timing issue.

RESOLVED: That the Town Council's Internal Controls and Risk Management Assessment for 2013 are reviewed and approved (15 – 1 abs)

104. Ethical Standards for Local Councils (Code of Conduct)

The Clerk provided members with a briefing on Ethical Standards for Local Councils (Code of Conduct). He explained that the Town Council adopted a new Code of Conduct in September 2012 and he had recently attended a useful briefing on the subject by ChALC. The Clerk highlighted areas of the slide sets and encouraged members to read the Code of Conduct, which is now attached as Appendix B in the revised Standing Orders.

Cllr West asked for clarification on the process a member of the Council should follow should they have any new Disclosable Pecuniary Interests to declare. The Clerk confirmed that he would need to be made aware of these. The detail would need to be added to the member's existing Register of Interests, initialled by him or her, and forwarded to the Monitoring Officer at Cheshire East.

Cllr Murray proposed that the report is received and thanked the Clerk for his diligence in collecting and presenting this information.

RESOLVED: That the briefing from the Clerk on Ethical Standards for Local Councils (Code of Conduct) is received with thanks (NC)

105. Meeting with ChALC

Cllr Hoyland provided a verbal update on discussions that took place at the M&E Committee meeting of 19th March 2013 with the Chief Officer and Chairman of ChALC to review the Town Council's membership of that organisation.

Cllr Hoyland explained that the discussion included a list of questions that were submitted in advance to ChALC, and to which ChALC had provided answers. These had been sent to members with the agenda pack for this meeting. He said that ChALC had provided an unreserved apology in the matter concerning their critique of the Poynton Town Strategy, understood the Council's concerns, and have also acknowledged that the Town Council's intervention on this issue had prompted them reconsider their mandate. On a personal level Cllr Hoyland said he now felt much more confident in remaining with the organisation. It can be regarded as an 'insurance policy' and they are available to provide information on important issues. Second, they are able to provide assistance should a Council part company with their Clerk, and are able to provide interim support and a degree of separation through the process.

Cllr Clarke endorsed Cllr Hoyland's comments and proposed that the update is received.

RESOLVED: That the written questions and answers, plus the verbal update on discussions that took place at the M&E meeting of 19th March 2013 with the Chief Officer and Chairman of ChALC, are received (NC)

106. Woodford Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Hoyland confirmed that he had not been able to provide an e-mail to follow the agenda pack on this issue as promised. He provided a verbal update and explained that the issue is moving forward. There are various options in considering the area of Poynton that the Neighbourhood Plan encompasses. This could either be the whole of Poynton or as a combined plan with the two communities of Woodford and Adlington. From the perspective of the two other communities, at the end of the process there is a ballot and given that they are much smaller communities a combined plan with Poynton would mean that the Neighbourhood Plan would essentially be decided by Poynton. The dilemma amongst the group is how best to designate the boundary, and another option may be to consider the West Ward as a whole or a boundary down Chester Road, including the aerodrome area and London Road South. Detail to calculate voter numbers would then need to be assessed to help create some equality and fairness in terms of the ballot. This however would still create anomalies. This is a difficult dilemma with pros and cons. Cllr Hoyland asked members to consider the initial reasons for a Working Group to develop a Neighbourhood Plan which was to try and achieve the best possible result in terms of any future development on the site. Including the whole of Poynton removes the incentive for Woodford and Adlington.

Cllr Murray felt without a report written it was difficult to make a decision. He is not particularly comfortable with the suggestion of separating streets in Poynton and it is important to be careful not to neglect a large part of Poynton in trying to gain cooperation with the other communities. It is important that Poynton do not give up their voting power on this issue.

Cllr Clarke said that the proposed division of Poynton is very artificial. This issue affects the whole of Poynton. The Neighbourhood Plan gives the opportunity to address other sites in Poynton too. Clearly, at present there are extreme development pressures building in the country generally and this area is on the frontline. The Neighbourhood Plan should cover the whole of Poynton. Partitioning in this artificial way is not the right way forward and Cllr Clarke felt he could not support such a proposal.

Cllr Hoyland said he understood the concerns expressed. He added that the whole idea of the Neighbourhood Plan is that boundaries do not have to follow the community and Ward boundaries. Across the country various Neighbourhood Plans have been compiled and he reiterated that it is important not to lose sight of the original reason for composing a Working

Group to create a Neighbourhood Plan for the very large area of the aerodrome. Although three Neighbourhood Plans can be compiled by each separate community it is necessary to develop a cohesive plan which achieves consensus. With three different communities working separately it would be very hard to achieve this and could result in all three communities being ignored.

Cllr Mrs Saunders agreed with Cllr Hoyland. She said it was important to continue working with the neighbouring communities. The three communities as a cohesive force would be better than each individual community. However to make a decision Cllr Mrs Saunders said it was necessary to have a written paper with the options and reasoning for each. This would allow the Council to debate and come to a conclusion on the issue. Cllr Murray agreed.

Cllr Hoyland confirmed that he would not expect a decision at this stage. He clarified that a principle to take into negotiations with fellow Councils is more helpful at this stage. A steer on the Council's preferred direction is what is required to achieve a compromise. Cllr Hoyland proposed that members of the Working Group set up a few briefings and events which members could attend to understand and fully appraise the issues and maps. This would be a better way to understand the issue and try and achieve a majority steer on the matter. Cllr Hoyland would then be happy to compile a written report for a final decision from Council on the negotiating position with the other communities.

RESOLVED: That members of the Working Group set up briefings and events for members to attend; and that Cllr Hoyland would then compile a written report for a final decision from Council on the negotiating position with the other communities (NC)

PART B

The public and the media are excluded from this part of the agenda on the basis of the Town Council's Standing Order 69(b) (i) – "Information relating to a particular employee, former employee or applicant to become an employee of the Council"

(Record removed)

The meeting concluded at 9.20 pm