

Main issues covered: Civic presentation to Dr Coley; Mayor's announcements; Civic Hall/Library integration project; Complaints against Members of the Town Council; Poynton Neighbourhood Plan; Standing Committees

MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT 8.00PM ON MONDAY 15TH SEPTEMBER 2014 IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC HALL, POYNTON.

PRESENT

Chairman: Cllr Ms R Horsman

Cllrs. M Beanland, L A Clarke, C Gorst, Mrs S Horsman, I Hollingworth, P Hoyland, G King, B Lewis, H Murray (from 8.15pm), Mrs J Saunders, A Smith, G Smith and R E West

40. Questions to the Mayor

There were no members of the public in attendance and so no questions to the Mayor.

41. Apologies for absence

Cllrs. G Bartos, Mrs J Sewart, M C G Sewart, and Mrs I Thornton-Maddocks

42. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Other Interests

None declared.

43. Minutes of the previous meetings held on 21st and 28th July 2014

Minutes from 21st July 2014, Page 63 – Cllr Hoyland clarified that this should read, “the environmental element of the process has to be conducted over 12 months to take into account the four seasons.”

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Town Council meeting on 21st July 2014, as amended, are approved as an accurate record and signed by the Mayor (12 - 1 abs)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Town Council meeting on 28th July 2014 are approved as an accurate record and signed by the Mayor (9 - 4 abs)

44. Civic Presentation to Dr Coley

The Mayor made a presentation to Dr John Coley, formerly of the McIlvride Medical Practice. The Mayor presented Dr Coley with a Certificate of Recognition on behalf of the Poynton with Worth Town Council to thank him for more than three decades of service to the community of Poynton through dedication and a close involvement with the McIlvride Medical Practice.

Dr Coley thanked the Town Council for the presentation. He said the last 35 years had been both a pleasure and great privilege to be a family doctor in a very friendly and happy village. Poynton has managed to combine both tradition and modernisation, and he has enjoyed being part of a successful community.

45. Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor provided an overview of her recent engagements. (A full account is available from the Clerk).

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

46. Civic Hall/Library Integration Project

Cllr A Smith highlighted key points from his written report on the Civic Hall/Library Integration Project, with a request that the merger between the Civic Hall/Library Project continues.

The roofing work to the Civic Hall starts on Monday as scheduled, and there is no reason for any delay.

Cllr A Smith reported that the cost of the shared entrance to serve the Civic Hall and Library has increased by £35,000. £10,000 of this is due to the asbestos found in the building. Cllr A Smith explained that the architect has informed him that the other £25,000 is made up of miscellaneous items. Cllr A Smith said that CE are in exactly the same position, and will also need to find funds for their overspend on the project. The proposal is that the work starts early next year and overlaps two fiscal years.

Cllr Smith said the recommendation is that the Town Council go ahead with this project that the Civic Hall/Library Project Steering Group continues to work closely and look at any opportunities to save money, with the recommendation subject to the approval of the F&GP agreeing the position on Town Council reserves.

Cllr Gorst reviewed the costings. The original £282,000 plus £20,000 for the fitting out of the Civic Hall makes £302,000. He said the Rolling Capital Programme Fund for the Civic Hall project is currently at £160,000 and the Earmarked Reserve for the Civic Hall roof is at £89,000. Cllr Gorst said that it

is expected that £25,000 from Devolved Services which is now surplus to requirements could be used towards the project. This leaves a shortfall of £28,000. The General Reserve has a surplus of £15,000 leaving a shortfall of £13,000. The project will be delivered over the two Financial Years and the £25,000 that is used to top up the reserves can be used to fund the remaining shortfall.

Cllr Gorst said that his concern is for any extra costs which are inevitable when projects are undertaken, with a continual spiralling of costs possible.

Cllr A Smith understood Cllr Gorst's issues, but said he did not feel unduly concerned in that the project does include contingency and he does not think there will be an overspend. Cllr A Smith said he was more concerned by any delay in starting the project, which would increase costs.

Cllr Clarke appreciated that there is a contingency but noted that although the Civic Hall building was relatively modern, it can give rise to unexpected issues concerning the structure.

Cllr Saunders proposed that the new budget is approved because any delay would mean that the project costs would increase. She added that this is a really important project which will leave a lasting legacy for the community of Poynton.

Cllr Lewis said that the costs have increased since the project was first proposed, particularly because no problem was originally envisaged with the asbestos. Cllr Lewis seconded the proposal to approve the revised budget.

Cllr Murray questioned whether there could be a phasing of payments, with the project paid for in stages. This provides some security and does not in any way delay the project. The Clerk confirmed that this is exactly the process that the Town Council will be following for the roof work. There will be some phasing and retention money, and the retention money will only be paid six months after the project is completed and signed off. There is no reason a similar process is not adopted for the main project.

Cllr West agreed the project should go ahead but considered the 10% funding increase to be right on the edge of what is acceptable. Cllr West was surprised that the presence of asbestos has not been taken into account before.

RESOLVED: That the written report from Cllr A Smith is received, and that the revised budget is approved (NC)

47. Complaints against Members of Poynton Town Council

The Clerk explained that the Town Council were asked to note the outcome of the CE Local Resolution Panel held on 16th July 2014, convened to consider two complaints against Members of Poynton Town Council.

Cllr Hoyland drew Members' attention to paragraph 6 of the Panel's report, stating the view of the Independent Person, and proposed that the report is received. This was seconded by Cllr King.

Cllr Lewis said that he did not bring his notes from the Local Resolution Panel with him tonight. He said Cllr Hoyland had to raise his voice to be heard after the Mayor had lost control of the 2013 Annual Town Assembly meeting, and she had asked Cllr Hoyland to take over. Cllr Lewis said that this is not in accordance with Standing Orders, and the Mayor should instead have asked the Deputy Mayor. Cllr Lewis said that Cllr Murray said he was guilty of saying too much, and he again should have left it to the Deputy Chairman of COPS who Cllr Lewis believes was present at the meeting. Cllr Lewis continued to explain that Cllr Murray was still found to be in breach of Town Council Standing Orders. Cllr Lewis said that if nothing is done about Cllr Murray's behaviour by the Town Council then this sets a precedent to allow Members to be as abusive as they like.

Cllr Hoyland said that it is regrettable that the process involved a collection of 10 people giving and listening to evidence, and a Panel of four plus the Borough Solicitor, who gave the complaint a thorough airing, and he is staggered at the cost of such an event. Cllr Hoyland quoted the views of the Independent Person in paragraph 6 of the report. The issue at the heart of the debate was one that everyone involved felt strongly about, and that their differences were around what each considered could be achieved at the meeting. It is an understandably emotive subject, and he considered that one small mistake can be made by one of the Councillors. Cllr Hoyland added that if there is anybody in this meeting that can stand and say they have never said or done anything that they subsequently wished they had not, or apologised for, please stand. Cllr Hoyland said he found it absurd that somebody who makes a mistake, apologises for it numerous times, and the CE and the Town Council are then forced to go through an extensive process that must have costs hundreds if not thousands of pounds in terms of both time and money. There is a clear stated conclusion from both the Panel and the Independent Person and Cllr Hoyland said he felt very strongly that there should be an end to the matter.

Cllr West said that he was not made aware of the Panel meeting and came to learn from the Monitoring Officer that he was named in the evidence presented. He was disappointed not to have been informed and considered it bad form. Cllr West said in the interest of Declarations of Interest that he would propose that the report is received since he was not involved in any way.

Cllr Mrs Horsman said that considering that she was Mayor at the time she would like it noted that she had never chaired a meeting like that before. This

was something completely out of her range. Cllr Mrs Horsman explained that she is a gardener not a business person - an ordinary gardener who is a voluntary member of this Council. She volunteered to be the Mayor and acknowledged that she did not know what she was doing at the meeting, and that was why she asked Cllr Hoyland to step in and assist. This she asked with the help of the Clerk, as covered by Standing Orders. Cllr Mrs Horsman added that she was very vulnerable at that time, and said she objected very strongly to being criticised so badly, because she does not think this was fair.

Cllr Lewis replied that what he had said was a comment, not a criticism. Cllr King said that this has continued long enough, and it was time to move on. Cllr West's proposal was seconded by Cllr Mrs Saunders.

The Mayor stated that the Town Council should now draw a line under this matter and start afresh, work as a team and not against each other. The Mayor added that if Members were not willing to work together they should not be part of the Council.

RESOLVED: That the report of the CE Local Resolution Panel be received and the outcome of the complaint noted (NC)

48. Poynton Neighbourhood Plan (NP)

On the issue of Governance, Cllr Hoyland apologised that he had not yet been able to provide a note to Cllr Clarke's Committee. Cllr Hoyland said he had not yet had time to produce this information, and is working with John Knight and others to do this.

Meanwhile Cllr Hoyland said that CE had provided a very useful training and information day primarily for volunteers who are taking part in the NPs.

Cllr Hoyland explained that CE are recommending quite strongly that Councils who want to fast track should consider very carefully the number of policies included in the NP. He explained that when the NP was first considered it was intended that a wide range of issues could be considered in the NP. This can still be done, however the main issue is the Green Belt and the vast expanse of land to the west of London Road. The suggestion is therefore that the Council pick three or four interconnecting policies to address that core issue. With the focus on the key issue the NP can be moved forward much faster - possibly in the region of 12 months.

Cllr A Smith asked how much weight this NP has in reality over the coming months and years to safeguard the Green Belt. Cllr Hoyland explained that the NP has come out of the Localism Act. Once it has been through a referendum it does have serious weight. Cllr Hoyland explained the layers of policy. The NP is a legal plan with significance only once it has been through a ballot and approved. It is possible that this can be overtaken by events - for example by developers trying to get ahead - and it is for this reason to get on with a smaller NP as quickly as possible.

Cllr Clarke explained that the Green Belt in Poynton is in the front line and Green Belt is a popular policy, and showing support for it would provide some defence. Cllr Clarke fully supported Cllr Hoyland's comments.

Cllr Hoyland clarified that the NP belongs to the people of Poynton and at the forefront are the volunteers from Poynton. Cllr Hoyland suggested that the Town Council recommends a short and quick NP.

Cllr A Smith asked when the NP would be available. Cllr Hoyland said it is hoped this would be in the next 12 months. There is a meeting next week with volunteers who are working hard producing project plans. One proposal will be for three groups to work in tandem and compress the work, which should speed up the process.

Cllr A Smith reiterated his concern of the NP overlapping with the election period next year.

RESOLVED: That the update on the Neighbourhood Plan is received, and that the recommendation for a shorter NP, concentrating on the Green Belt and the west side of London Road, is agreed (NC)

49. Standing Committees

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Facilities, Infrastructure and Economic Development meeting held on 30th June 2014 be adopted by full Council (NC)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Management and Establishment meeting held on 1st July 2014 be adopted by full Council (NC)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Community, Order and Public Safety meeting held on 7th July 2014 be adopted by full Council (NC)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning and Environment meeting held on 14th July 2014 be adopted by full Council (NC)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Additional Planning and Environment meeting held on 26th August 2014 be adopted by full Council (NC)

50. CE Strategic Highways and Transportation

RESOLVED: That the response from CE Strategic Highways and Transportation dated 4th August 2014 regarding the Poynton Relief Road is received (NC)

The meeting concluded at 9.05pm