

## **HORWICH TOWN COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the Finance and General Purpose Committee held in the Council Chamber, Public Hall on Monday, 11 March, 2013 commencing at 7.30 pm.

PRESENT: Councillors: C. Root (in the Chair), K. Helsby, J. Kellett, J. Lavin, L. McCartin, L. Rock, S. Rock, K Thomson

Town Clerk, C. Hutchinson

Also present: Bolton Ward Councillors: S. Pickup, R. Silvester

### **CHAIRPERSON TO OUTLINE THE FIRE SAFETY EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

FG5901 Councillor Root outlined the procedure

### **TO SUBMIT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND ACCEPT THE REASONS:**

FG5902 Apologies for absence were accepted from Councillors Baxendale and Downes, due to ill health, from Councillor Flanigan due to another commitment and from Councillor Ramamurthy who was away.

Resolved to accept the apologies as presented.

### **TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 FEBRUARY 2013:**

FG5903 Resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2013.

### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:**

FG5904 None

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

FG5905 None.

### **TO WELCOME SERGEANT ANDY VERNON FROM GREATER MANCHESTER POLICE TO PRESENT AN UPDATE ON THE RESTRUCTURE OF LOCAL POLICING AND TO DISCUSS IDEAS FOR CRIME PREVENTION IN HORWICH:**

FG5906

Members welcomed Sergeant Andy Vernon and PCSO Keith Jackson to the meeting. Sergeant Vernon gave a brief overview of crime in Horwich. He stressed that Horwich was still a low crime area, compared to other parts of Bolton. There had been a recent spike in burglary figures but this had been followed by a successful investigation. Over the last 6 – 8 months the police had been trying to reduce crime, by security checks on garden sheds, parked cars, front doors etc, with the aim of educating people to prevent crime taking place, and this included the promotion of Homewatch schemes.

Sergeant Vernon informed Members that Greater Manchester Police were due to introduce a new way of policing called Policing Model 2 which would be implemented from 12 March 2013. Neighbourhood policing in the area would now be split into 4 teams, with staff at Horwich working alongside staff from other areas. The same beat managers and PCSOs would be working in Horwich, but the new arrangement would give them more support and an enlarged team to rely on.

It was acknowledged that the Town Council had recently had to make difficult decisions about services in Horwich in response to a difficult economic climate. Sergeant Vernon introduced PCSO Keith Jackson who worked as the Homewatch Liaison Officer based at Westhoughton Police Station for Westhoughton Town Council. PC Jackson worked closely with police officers and PCSOs. Greater Manchester Police were actively promoting the creation of new Homewatch schemes along with the rebooting of old schemes. PC Jackson explained that there were 147 Homewatch schemes in Westhoughton, helping to keep crime down over a large part of the town, by targeting areas where patterns of crime emerge. Once schemes are set up it is sometimes difficult for PCSOs to manage them, but the Co-ordinator provides continuity, acting as a point of contact between residents and police officers and this reflects well on the Town Council.

Homewatch members are kept updated by means by email and mobiles and both Twitter and Facebook are also useful mediums. It was estimated that the cost of the service of Homewatch Liaison officer to the Town Council would be approximately £3,000 p.a. The only other expense would be the provision of Homewatch signs. In response to a query PC Jackson confirmed that there were already lots of Homewatch schemes in Horwich, with the opportunity to set up many more.

Members felt that the option of Horwich Town Council having the services of a Homewatch Liaison Officer should be discussed in more detail and resolved to consider this as an agenda item at the earliest opportunity.

Both Sergeant Vernon and PCSO Jackson were thanked for their attendance and left the meeting at this point.

**TO CONSIDER A REQUEST FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM 1471 HORWICH SQUADRON AIR TRAINING CADETS TOWARDS THE COST OF OUTDOOR FITNESS EQUIPMENT AT A COST OF £200:**

FG5907 Members felt that this group provided a worthwhile service to the community and had no hesitation in deciding to support this application.

Resolved unanimously to award a grant of £200 to 1471 Horwich Squadron Air Training Cadets towards the cost of outdoor fitness equipment.

TO CONSIDER A QUOTATION FROM HW AUDIO FOR PROVISION OF SOUND SYSTEM AMOUNTING TO £255 PLUS VAT FOR REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY ON 10 NOVEMBER 2013 AND £198 PLUS VAT FOR THE LIGHTING OF THE CIVIC CHRISTMAS TREE ON 6 DECEMBER 2013:

FG5908 It was noted that the prices quoted had remained the same as last year. In response to a query about purchase of equipment, it was noted that much of the equipment was bulky and would need setting up and storage facilities would be required. It was agreed it was more practical to hire the equipment for just two occasions in the civic year.

Resolved to approve the quotation from HW Audio for provision of sound system amounting to £255 plus VAT for Remembrance Sunday on 10 November 2013 and £198 plus VAT for the Lighting of the Civic Christmas Tree ceremony on 6 December 2013.

TO APPROVE THE QUARTERLY STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS TO 31 DECEMBER 2012

FG5909 Resolved to approve the quarterly statement of accounts to 31 December 2012.

TO APPROVE THE QUARTERLY BUDGET REVIEW TO 31 DECEMBER 2012:

FG5910 Resolved to approve the quarterly budget review to 31 December 2012.

TO APPROVE THE QUARTERLY REPORT FROM INTERNAL AUDIT TO 31 DECEMBER 2012:

FG5911 Resolved to approve the quarterly report from internal audit to 31 December 2012.

TOWN CLERK'S REPORT - FOR INFORMATION ONLY:

- FG5912
- a. Horwich Festival of Racing: letter of thanks for grant award of £3,000 for 2013
  - b. Bolton Council Area Forum: information re decisions made by Councillors under Bolton Council's scheme of delegated powers as presented at Two Towns Area Forum on 26 February 2013
  - c. Bolton Council Area Forum: notice of invitation to public meeting on policing and crime in Bolton on Tuesday 30 April 2013
  - d. LALC: information about the review of the quality parish scheme and a letter from the Chairman of NALC

Resolved to note the Town Clerk's report.

REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES:

FG5913            None

TO CONFIRM THE DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING AS MONDAY 8 APRIL 2013:

FG5914            Resolved to confirm the date of the next meeting as Monday 8 April 2013.

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 BE TEMPORARILY EXCLUDED, AND, IF PRESENT ARE INSTRUCTED TO WITHDRAW:

FG5915            In view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted it was Resolved to exclude members of the press and public.