

MINUTE NUMBERS 372 - 375

Minutes of Meeting of the Council

Meeting Date: Tuesday, 9 October 2012, starting at 6.30pm
Present: Councillor I Sayers (Chairman)

Councillors:

P Ainsworth	S Knox
J E Alcock	G Mirfin
R Bennett	R Moores
S Bibby	R Newmark
I Brown	E M H Ranson
S Carefoot	M Robinson
P Dowson	J Rogerson
R J Elms	C Ross
R Hargreaves	G Scott
J B Hill	R E Sherras
T Hill	D T Smith
B Hilton	D Taylor
K Hind	M Thomas
S A Hirst	R J Thompson
J Holgate	N C Walsh
S Hore	J White
K Horkin	A Yearling
A M Knox	

In attendance: Chief Executive, Director of Community Services, Director of Resources, Head of HR, Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

372 PRAYERS

The Mayor's Chaplain, the Reverend A Froud, opened the meeting with prayers.

373 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors S Brunskill, L Rimmer and R Swarbrick.

374 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor A Yearling declared an interest in respect of a Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor A Knox regarding the Event Safety Advisory Group (ESAG).

375 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chief Executive confirmed that there were three items of public participation.

Firstly Mr R Dugdale, Chairman of the Clitheroe Community Bonfire Committee spoke regarding arrangements that had been put in place for the bonfire to take

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place this year. Mr Dugdale was concerned with issues that had been raised by the ESAG group. He confirmed that the bonfire committee could not work with the ESAG group as currently formed but were prepared to reconstitute the bonfire committee in future years if the Council reviewed the operation to make it more approachable.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor M Ranson, thanked Mr Dugdale for his comments and confirmed that the Council had offered to help with the organisation of the event and traffic management schemes on several occasions.

Next, Miss Hatherell of Clitheroe spoke on the same matter and criticised the way in which ESAG operated. She highlighted concerns regarding the constitution and operation of the ESAG group. She called for the group to be disbanded and replaced with a working group with an Elected Member as Chair.

Councillor Ranson again reminded Members that there had been discussions on issues regarding the bonfire with the bonfire committee since last year's event. He said that the Council would give full consideration to establishing a working group to look into the role of ESAG.

Finally, Miss Blezard of Clitheroe also spoke on the matter and particular on the community impact of the bonfire and the benefits that she believed it brought to a wide range of people in the valley and beyond.

Councillor Ranson thanked Miss Blezard for her comments and confirmed that the Council would continue to work with anyone who wished to support a community bonfire in Clitheroe.

376 COUNCIL MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 28 August 2012 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

377 MAYORAL COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor reported on a range of events that he had attended since the last meeting.

He was particularly pleased to have attended four events associated with the Preston Guild Year, including a formal proclamation, trade procession, Thanksgiving Service in the Minster and Grand Mayoral Ball.

He had also attended events run by a range of voluntary groups across the borough and had visited Lancashire Constabulary's open day at their Greenbank Headquarters.

He had attended several musical evenings at local Churches and the Duke of Lancaster's Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving.

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The Mayor also reported on events attended by the Deputy Mayor and Mayoress.

Finally he was pleased to be involved with World Sight Day, which would be taking place on Thursday, 11 October at Clitheroe Market, involving Guide Dogs for the Blind.

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PRESENTATION BY LIEUTENANT COLONEL JONNY LIGHTEN

The Mayor welcomed Lieutenant Colonel Jonny Lighten to the meeting. He confirmed that the Council was a firm supporter of the armed forces and had recently approved Councillor Jim White as the Council's Armed Forces Champion.

Lieutenant Colonel Lighten spoke of his role in assisting members of the Armed Forces to make a smooth transition to civilian life at the end of their army career. He asked Members to consider signing up to an Armed Forces Community Covenant, which advocated the principle of no disadvantage for ex-service men and women. A community covenant was a voluntary statement of mutual support between a civilian community and its local Armed Forces community.

Councillor Jim White supported Lieutenant Colonel Lighten's work and confirmed that the Armed Forces Community Covenant Scheme was fully supported by the Royal British Legion and the Veterans' Association. He encouraged Members to contribute to the creation of a draft covenant. The Leader of the Council, Councillor M Ranson, confirmed that the Council had considered the Community Covenant and would be making a decision on the matter in the near future.

The Mayor thanked Lieutenant Colonel Lighten for his presentation.

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NOTICE OF MOTION

Councillor Yearling left the meeting.

Councillor A Knox proposed a Notice of Motion in respect of the community bonfire and the ESAG group. He spoke of the work of the Community Bonfire Committee and the actions they undertook to organise the event each year. The Motion proposed was that:

- “1. *Council notes with regret the announcement of the cancellation of the Clitheroe bonfire.*
2. *Council also notes the advisory nature of ESAG.*
3. *Council requires the Chief Executive, in conjunction with a working group of Members (3 Conservative, 1 Liberal Democrat, 1 Independent) to review ESAG's policies, constitution and procedures to ensure that all advice it provides is done in a constructive, helpful and timely manner.*

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4. *Council requires that the outcome of this view is reported to the next meeting of Policy and Finance Committee.”*

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Ranson who explained the background to ESAG and their role as an advisory body. He also reiterated that the Council had worked with the bonfire committee for the last 12 months alongside the ESAG group. The motion was then debated.

RESOLVED: That the Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor A Knox be approved:

Councillor Yearling rejoined the meeting.

380 NOTICE OF MOTION

Consideration was given to a Notice of Motion proposed by the Leader of the Council, Councillor M Ranson, namely:

“This Council, wishing to safeguard the quality of the built environment in the Ribble Valley, supports the Local Government Association in rejecting the Government’s claim that the planning system is stifling economic growth and opposes Government’s proposals to significantly extend permitted development rights and to allow the removal of affordable housing requirements from developers.”

Councillor A Knox seconded the Motion.

The Leader outlined the concerns of the Local Government Association regarding proposals to extend permitted development and the risks associated with these proposals.

The Motion was then debated.

RESOLVED: That the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor M Ranson be approved:

381 LEADER’S REPORT

The Leader began by thanking Lieutenant Colonel Jonny Lighten for his presentation on the Armed Forces Covenant. He reiterated the Council’s support for the Armed Forces and particularly the Duke of Lancaster’s Regiment, who had been granted the Freedom of the Borough in 2010.

The Leader went on to highlight a range of successful Council initiatives that had been developed in partnership with other organisations. He cited a recent example of this in the approach that had been developed to address under aged drinking in a partnership project with the Police, Young People’s Service, Trading Standards and Off-Licences. The project aimed to deter young people from drink and drug use, particularly in the grounds of Clitheroe Castle. He was pleased to report that the scheme had been so successful that it was to be rolled out to the Longridge area.

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The Leader referred to another successful partnership – the Ribble Valley Community Safety Partnership. This was a multi-agency organisation led by Ribble Valley Borough Council and Lancashire Constabulary that had been tasked with reducing crime in the borough by 13.5% within 3 years when it had been formed in 1998. The Leader was pleased to report that crime in Ribble Valley had reduced by over 35% since that date and the Partnership had maintained its position in the top five performing Community Safety Partnerships in the UK. The Partnership had contributed significantly to crime reduction in the borough through a range of varied and innovative projects, which had resulted in Ribble Valley being named joint second safest place in the UK.

The Leader wished to congratulate all agencies involved in the Partnership for their outstanding commitment to reducing crime in Ribble Valley. He also offered his special thanks to Councillor Jan Alcock who had been Chairman of the Partnership for some years and who had recently resigned from the post.

He also expressed his thanks to Inspector Chris Saville who had been the Police Inspector at Clitheroe during the course of the project.

Finally the Leader praised the work of Council staff who worked hard to provide an excellent service to residents.

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LEADER'S QUESTION TIME

The Shadow Leader, Councillor A Knox, asked the Leader to confirm what the collection rate of Council Tax in the Ribble Valley had been in the last financial year. The Leader of the Council, Councillor M Ranson, thanked Councillor Knox's question and confirmed that the collection rate for Council Tax in 2011/12 had been 99.1%. This was the twelfth highest of the 325 Local Authorities in England. The Leader was pleased to report that in the current year the collection rate had increased to 99.5% to date.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Knox asked if the Leader shared his concerns that collection rates could be adversely affected by changes to Council Tax benefit arrangements. The Leader confirmed that the Council would aim to continue to maintain and improve collection rates in future years.

Next, Councillor Knox asked the Leader how many licensed taxi and private hire drivers there were in the Ribble Valley. The Leader confirmed that there were 57 hackney drivers and 114 private hire drivers that were currently licensed in the borough.

In a supplementary statement, Councillor Knox suggested that a partnership be established between the enforcement staff, taxi drivers and Lancashire County Council to work on enforcing 20mph areas in the borough.

Finally, Councillor Knox asked in respect of total affordable planning consents, what percentage had been for one-bedroom properties in the last two years. The Leader confirmed that out of 316 units approved from November 2010 to October 2012 only one unit had been for a one-bedroom unit.

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In a supplementary statement, Councillor Knox highlighted that it was likely that more one bedroom units would be needed in the future and hoped that planners would bear that in mind.

383 COMMITTEE MINUTES

(i) Accounts and Audit Committee – 22 August 2012

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the above meeting be received.

(ii) Licensing Committee – 4 September 2012

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the above meeting be received.

(iii) Community Committee – 11 September 2012

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the above meeting be received.

(iv) Personnel Committee – 12 September 2012

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the above meeting be received.

(v) Planning and Development Committee – 13 September 2012

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the above meeting be received.

(vi) Health and Housing Committee – 20 September 2012

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the above meeting be received.

(vii) Policy and Finance Committee – 25 September 2012

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the above meeting be received.

(viii) Parish Council Liaison Committee – 27 September 2008

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the above meeting be received.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm

If you have any queries on these minutes please contact Marshal Scott (414400).