

Minutes of Meeting of the Council

Meeting Date: Tuesday, 23 April 2013, starting at 6.30pm
Present: Councillor I Sayers (Chairman)

Councillors:

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

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

Councillors observed a minutes silence in remembrance of former Mayor, Gwen Pye, who had recently died.

801 PRAYERS

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

802 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors I Brown, R Carefoot, S Knox, R Moores, R Newmark and J White.

803 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

804 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chief Executive, confirmed that there was one item of public participation from Mr Graham Sowter. The Mayor invited Mr Sowter to ask his question.

Mr Sower asked a question regarding the Council's policy on holiday accommodation and concerns regarding the number of holiday units that were given planning permission and the lack of subsequent enforcement of planning conditions.

The Chairman of Planning and Development Committee, Councillor Terry Hill, thanked Mr Sowter for his question and confirmed that it was an issue the Council had considered for several years. He noted that the development of holiday accommodation was of particular concern for the Council in light of its commitment to the tourism industry and its importance to the local economy. However, he did wish to reassure Mr Sowter that the Council's new policy on Dwellings in the Open Countryside and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty aspects of the Core Strategy, would go some way to addressing the issue and reinforce the Council's position on the matter.

In a supplementary statement Mr Sowter stated that he believed the Council needed to work harder to reinforce any condition that was within policy.

Councillor T Hill confirmed that the Council took enforcement seriously but he would undertake to make sure that information about how many housing registers had been checked in the last 12 months was made available to Mr Sowter and give a clearer definition of holiday accommodation within policies.

At the end of public participation the Mayor thanked Mr Sowter for his contribution and invited him to remain for the rest of the meeting if he so wished. Mr Sowter chose to leave the meeting.

805 COUNCIL MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 5 March 2013 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

806 MAYORAL COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor reported on engagements that he had attended since the last meeting. These had included the Ribble Valley Tourism Association AGM, a visit to see tree planting at Forest School Nursery, a reception with the Lord Lieutenant to celebrate the success of last year's Poppy Appeal and induction services for two new members of the Clergy in the borough.

The Mayor also reported that the Deputies had attended a variety of events including the St George's Day Parade at Blackburn Cathedral.

Finally the Mayor wished to thank the Mayoress for her lead on fundraising activities throughout the year and thanked everyone for their support during his term of office. He also wished to thank the officers Olwen Heap and Ian Potter for their hard work and dedication in supporting the mayoralty.

807 LONG SERVICE AWARDS

The Mayor made presentations to staff who had achieved 25 years' service with the Council. He presented gifts to Janet Beer – Receptionist at Ribblesdale Pool and John Macholc – Head of Planning Services. The Mayor thanked the staff for their loyalty and commitment to the Council and for all their dedicated work over the years.

808 LEADER'S REPORT

The Leader began by thanking the Mayor and Mayoress for all the hard work that they had put into a very successful Mayoral year.

The Leader then went on to announce that he would be stepping down as Council Leader as from 14 May 2013 – the date of the annual meeting. He was delighted to confirm that Councillor Stuart Hirst had been elected as Leader of the Conservative Group in his place, with Councillor Simon Hore elected as Deputy Leader.

The Leader then reflected on his six years in office and thanked his colleagues for their support, the Opposition for their reasonable and co-operative approach and officers and staff for their help and courtesy in all his dealings with them.

The Leader reflected on key successes during his last six years including the awarding of the Freedom of the Borough to the Duke of Lancaster's Regiment, the rolling out of the wheelie bin service across the borough, the smooth transition of the appointment of a new Chief Executive and, importantly, that the Council had maintained and increased its financial stability in difficult times whilst at the same time safeguarding services, reducing overall costs and keeping costs to residents down to a minimum.

The Leader was also pleased that he had been able to increase the profile of the borough at a county and national level and that people throughout the county were more aware of Ribble Valley and its reputation as an excellent place to visit and live. He was proud of the continued success of the Food Festival and its ability to attract thousands of people to visit the area to sample its produce.

He also highlighted some disappointments during the last six years including the failure of Ribble Valley Homes to actively develop and build affordable homes in the area and issues that had arisen in respect of the Government's planning policy.

The Leader finished by thanking everyone for their help and support and wished his successor, Councillor Hirst, best wishes for his time as Leader.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Ranson for his commitment and dedication to the role of Leader of the Council over the last six years.

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LEADER'S QUESTION TIME

The Leader of the opposition Councillor A Knox asked how many alcohol related incidents had been reported in Clitheroe Town Centre in the past year. The Leader of the Council, Councillor M Ranson, thanked Councillor Knox for his question and confirmed that a total of 37 alcohol related crimes had occurred in the 12 months between 1 April 2012 and 31 March 2013. He reported that the majority of those incidents had taken place in licensed premises.

Next Councillor Knox asked how many infringements of planning conditions had been addressed in the last year. The Leader confirmed that during the period January to October 2012, 185 complaints had been considered, 20% of which had related to breach of a condition. He noted that Committee recognised the importance of monitoring conditions and this had been included in the work plan of the Enforcement Officer. He reported that there were currently 83 active complaints, of which 21 related to a breach of condition.

Finally, Councillor Knox asked what plans the Council had to share services with other authorities. The Leader confirmed that at present the Council had no plans to share any further Council services but it was an area that was kept under review and if an opportunity arose in the future that would benefit the residents of the Ribble Valley they would be given serious consideration.

In a supplementary question Councillor Knox asked if the Council had received any encouragement from Planning Ministers to merge planning departments across districts. The Leader reported that he had not received any such encouragement.

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NOTICE OF MOTION

Consideration was given to a Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor J Rogerson which read as follows:

“That Ribble Valley Borough Council acknowledges the benefits of the review of public conveniences and that Longridge being the second largest town within the borough, has a need for some form of public toilets alongside the community toilet scheme.

This Council now urges officers and Community Committee to look positively on some form of public provision on Berry Lane in the centre of Longridge.

This should be a full disabled provision and could possibly be coin operated which could then make them available 24 hours, 7 days a week.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor D Smith and debated by the Council.

Councillor K Hind proposed an amendment to the motion and asked that the following statement be added to the end of the motion:

“This Council refers the provision of public toilets in Longridge to the Community Committee for reconsideration.”

The amendment was debated. A vote was taken and the amendment was carried.

The amended Notice of Motion was then put to the vote and carried.

RESOLVED: That the following Notice of Motion be accepted:

“That Ribble Valley Borough Council acknowledges the benefits of the review of public conveniences and that Longridge being the second largest town within the borough, has a need for some form of public toilets alongside the community toilet scheme.

This Council now urges officers and Community Committee to look positively on some form of public provision on Berry Lane in the centre of Longridge.

This should be a full disabled provision and could possibly be coin operated which could then make them available 24 hours, 7 days a week.

This Council refers to the provision of public toilets in Longridge to the Community Committee for reconsideration.”

811 COMMITTEE MINUTES

(i) Community Committee – 12 March 2013.

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

(ii) Planning and Development Committee – 14 March 2013

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

(iii) Licensing Committee – 19 March 2013

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the above meeting be received with the exception of Minute number 708.

MINUTE 708 – GAMBLING STATEMENT OF POLICY

RESOLVED: That the Gambling Statement of Policy be approved.

(iv) Personnel Committee – 20 March 2013

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

(v) Health and Housing Committee – 21 March 2013

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

(vi) Policy and Finance Committee – 26 March 2013

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the above meeting be received with the exception of Minute numbers 746 and 748.

MINUTE 746 – TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

RESOLVED: That the Treasury Management Strategy 2013/2014 be approved.

MINUTE 748 – TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICIES AND PRACTICES 2013/14

RESOLVED: That the Treasury Management Policies and Practices 2013/14 be approved.

(vii) Accounts and Audit Committee– 27 March 2013

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

(viii) Parish Council Liaison Committee – 28 March 2013

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

(ix) Planning and Development Committee – 11 April 2013

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

The meeting closed at 7.50pm.

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