

HORLEY TOWN COUNCIL
Finance & General Purposes Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the above-named Committee held at the Albert Rooms, Albert Road, Horley on Tuesday 31 July 2012 at 7.30 p.m.

Present: Cllr R Sherwin – Chairman
C Austin, J Baird, R Bethell, J Chapman, M George,
M Goldsmith, Samantha Marshall, V Marshall, R Olliver,
D Powell and M Robinson.

In Attendance: A Jones – Town Clerk
C Fenton – Deputy Town Clerk
R Cavanagh – Administrative Assistant

F 3009 Apologies and Reasons for Absence

RESOLVED: that the apology of Cllr M Miller be accepted, for reasons as specified in the Attendance Register.

F 3010 Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest, specific to the meeting.

RESOLVED: noted.

F 3011 Public Forum

No members of the public were present.

RESOLVED: noted.

**F 3012 Approval of Minutes
Finance & General Purposes Committee, 12 June 2012**

The minutes of the above meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee were presented for confirmation by Committee members and signature by the Committee Chairman.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the above meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee, including all confidential items, be approved.

F 3013 Consultation on the Appointment of External Auditor for Five Years from 2012/2013

The Clerk informed members that the Audit Commission had responded, regarding The Town Council's suggestion that the external auditor be changed on a more regular basis. A copy of the response is appended.

RESOLVED: noted.

F 3014 Councillors' Audit for May and June 2012

RESOLVED: *that the Councillors' Audit Certificate and Clerk's responses (where applicable), as appended to these minutes, be received.*

F 3015 Attendance at next Councillors' Audit

RESOLVED: *that Cllrs Celia Austin and James Baird conduct the next audit. (Date and time to be advised.)*

F 3016 Financial Reports for May and June 2012

The Clerk confirmed that explanations of differences between estimates and receipts and payments would begin in the July reports. The Clerk and Committee Chairman agreed to consider whether some cost centres (e.g. allotments) could be merged.

RESOLVED: *noted.*

F 3017 Financial Reports for May 2012

RESOLVED: *that the following reports, as appended to these minutes, be approved:*

- i) Bank Reconciliations*
- ii) Summary of Receipts and Payments Compared with Estimates*
- iii) Payments List for May totalling £35,143.63 plus VAT (£36,776.75)*
- iv) Receipts List for May totalling £3,949.29 (No VAT)*

F 3018 Financial Reports for June 2012

RESOLVED: *that the following reports, as appended to these minutes, be approved:*

- i) Bank Reconciliations*
- ii) Summary of Receipts and Payments Compared with Estimates*
- iii) Payments List for June totalling £35,299.08 plus VAT (£37,945.24)*
- iv) Receipts List for June totalling £3,858.13 plus VAT (£3904.18)*

F 3019 Investment Policy (Approved Borrowers)

Members reviewed the list of Approved Borrowers.

RESOLVED: *that the list of Borrowers be approved, with the addition of Nationwide. (Details are appended.)*

F 3020 Precept / Reserves

RESOLVED: *that an informal briefing be held at the next meeting of this Committee. (A copy of the Precept Timetable is appended.)*

F 3021 “Meet Your Councillor”

RESOLVED: *that a rota be prepared and be circulated to members. (A copy is appended.)*

F 3022 Town Council Web Site

Cllr Baird highlighted some improvements which he felt could be made to the web site. The Clerk replied that he was already discussing possible enhancements with the company who hosted the web site.

RESOLVED:

- i) that a Communications Working Group be formed, membership to comprise Cllrs Baird, Samantha Marshall, Olliver, Robinson and the Clerk.*
- ii) that the Group meet and review the Town Council's Communications Policy (including web site enhancements).*
- iii) that the Group put forward recommendations, for consideration at the next meeting of this Committee.*

F 3023 Members' Intranet

The Clerk explained that four members had been using the intranet for a trial period.

RESOLVED: *that use of the Intranet be made available to all members.*

F 3024 Members' Bulletin

RESOLVED: *that this be issued on a two weekly basis.*

F 3025 Albert Rooms – Modifications to Heating System

RESOLVED: *that British Gas be appointed to install a Magna Clean system for the sum of £1,150 plus VAT.*

F 3026 Borough Standards Committee

It was noted that there had been no recent meetings of the Committee.

RESOLVED: *noted.*

F 3027 Surrey County Association of Parish & Town Councils (SCAPTC) & National Association of Local Councils (NALC)

The Committee Chairman expressed concern that the cost of the Town Council's SCAPTC and NALC subscription for 2012 – 2013 had increased by £349, considerably more than had been expected. The Committee Vice-Chairman advised that this was in part due to the withdrawal of the discount for larger councils. After further discussion, the following was resolved:

F 3027) *RESOLVED: that the Committee Vice-Chairman write to the SCAPTC Director, expressing this Council's concerns about the level of subscription increase. (A copy of the letter is appended.)*

F 3028 Localism Act 2011 – General Power of Competence

The Clerk advised members that he would be attending a training session in November and would then be able to advise members how the Power might be used.

RESOLVED: noted.

F 3029 Borough Council Seminar on Neighbourhood Planning

The Clerk reported that it was hoped to hold the seminar at the Town Council Offices in late September or early October.

RESOLVED: noted.

**F 3030 Declaration of Interest Forms
(Notification of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests)**

The Clerk reminded members that some forms were still outstanding and added that they were a legal requirement under the new Localism Act.

RESOLVED: noted.

F 3031 Member Conduct under the Localism Act

The Clerk advised members that training on the above subject would be available at Reigate Town Hall on Tuesday 21 August 2012. (Full details in the Members' Bulletin.)

RESOLVED: noted.

F 3032 Localisation of Council Tax Support

The Clerk advised members that there would no longer be a national Council Tax Benefits system from 1 April 2013. Instead, local billing authorities (District and Borough Councils) would be required to introduce their own Council Tax support system. Central Government was assuming that there would be a 10% reduction in expenditure through these changes and it would be up to local authorities to determine how to manage the funding reduction. (The 90% funding would be in the form of an upfront grant to billing authorities.)

The Clerk went on to explain that Reigate & Banstead would shortly be writing to the Town Council to seek its views on the Borough's proposed scheme, before the public consultation was launched. It was understood that the Borough Council's preferred option was to recover the 10% cut partly from reducing Council Tax support and partly from additional revenue raised through Council Tax, in particular by the additional income generated by

- F 3032)** changes to the discounts for second homes and empty properties. The Clerk added that the effect of the funding reduction on the Town Council precept could be as much as £3,000.

Members expressed great concern at the lack of consultation with parishes and the likely Council Tax increases as a result of these measures. After further discussion the following was resolved;

RESOLVED:

- i) that the Clerk and Council Chairman seek the support of Sam Gyimah MP. (A copy of the letter is appended.)**
- ii) that the Committee Chairman and the Clerk meet with the Borough Council's Revenues and Benefits Manager to discuss the issues further.**
- iii) that the matter be re-considered at a future meeting, once more details are known.**

- F 3033** Horley Anderson / Innes Pavilion Division

The Clerk reported that the demolition project was now complete, subject to a few snagging issues.

RESOLVED: noted.

Community Foundation for Surrey (Horley Edmonds Community Fund)

- F 3034** **RESOLVED: that receipt be noted of the fund statements from April – June 2012. (Copies are appended to these minutes.)**

- F 3035** The Clerk reported that the Foundation would be holding an event at Westminster Abbey in October to celebrate £3 million being given out in grants. (Invitations to follow.)

RESOLVED: noted.

- F 3036** Letters Received

RESOLVED: that receipt be noted of the following:

- i) Grant application from local charity (The Clerk to advise that the scheme is not operating this year.)**
- ii) Details of "Future Policing of Surrey" seminar at Reigate Town Hall on 6 August.**

- F 3037** Diary Dates

RESOLVED: that forthcoming events be noted, in particular the first tour of open spaces on 24 July and tour of the Churchyards on 22 August.

