

## **HORLEY TOWN COUNCIL**

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee  
held at the Town Council Offices, Albert Road, Horley on 9 November 2021, at 7.30 pm**

<b>Present</b>	Cllrs	Jante Baird	Adrian Kitajewski	Samantha Marshall
		Jordan Beech	Helen Kitajewski (Chairman)	Simon Marshall
		Andy Dye	Wayne Phillips	Robert Marr
		Mike George	David Powell*	Martin Saunders

**\* Absent**

**In Attendance** Cllr Hannah Avery

**Also Present** Joan Walsh (Town Clerk)  
Judy Morgan (RFO and Planning Officer)

**F 4764 Apologies and Reasons for Absence**

***RESOLVED: that the apologies of Cllr Powell be accepted for reasons as specified in the Attendance Register.***

**F 4765 Approval of Minutes**

***RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on 28 September 2021, be approved.***

**F 4766 Finance Updates**

**F 4739 Arrangements for the first internal audit for 2021/22 with Mulberry & Co.**

The Town Clerk advised that the interim Internal Audit to be conducted by Andy Beams of Mulberry & Co would take place on Friday 12 November. She gave an overview of the matters that would be included, inter alia, Financial Matters and Governance. The interim audit report would be circulated to all Members for information on receipt.

***RESOLVED: noted.***

**F 4757 Arrangements for the Remembrance Services Programme 2021 in Horley**

The Town Clerk confirmed that all arrangements are in place and that the Memorial Garden is looking good. The Re-dedication ceremony would take place on Wednesday the 10<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 am, the two-minute silence would be observed on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> in the Town Centre at 11:00 am and on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> the Parade and Service would take place. Cllr Powell hoped to be in attendance and said that all Members were welcome.

***RESOLVED: noted.***

**F 4760 Town Councillors' Christmas Hospitality**

It was confirmed that the upstairs hall at Regent Hall had now been booked for the Hospitality. HTC would have use of the urn and it would be possible to achieve a good separation of the tables. Scaled down hospitality with all offers in individual wrappings was planned. Members were reminded to make their donations and that Cllr volunteers would be needed on the day to help set up and clear up.

***RESOLVED: noted.***

**Proposals for installation of Solar Panels and Battery Storage at the Horley Town Council Offices and Edmonds Hall in consultation with the HTC Environment Group**

**F 4767 Update on the recent site survey undertaken and evaluation together with revised estimates received from the interested contractors.**

The Town Clerk said that the full site survey had now been carried out by the Solar Together Contractor's surveyor, the results of which had been previously circulate to all Members. This had resulted in a new quote for Members to consider in relation to two previously obtained quotes for comparison.

Members carefully considered the quotes, and the following comments were made: -

- Concern was expressed that the Council was being rushed into a decision
- It was difficult to make a comparison as the quotes were not exactly like for like.
- It was noted that all batteries and all panels are not the same as some have different capacities and some are more efficient than others
- It was not clear if all the quotes guaranteed the same life expectancy
- Members were conscious of delivering good value to residents
- Some concern was expressed about the effect the expenditure would have on the precept.

Cllr Saunders explained the savings that the Council could make by installing Solar Panels. He highlighted that the Solar Together Scheme came with an insurance backed guarantee and that it was also backed by SCC and RBBC.

Cllr Simon Marshall proposed, and Cllr Samantha Marshall seconded that any decision on whether to proceed be deferred to Full Council at its next meeting on 14 December 2021. The motion was carried. The RFO was asked to obtain like for like quotes for consideration based on the results of the onsite survey.

**F 4767 *RESOLVED: To defer the decision on whether proceed with the proposed installation of Solar Panels and Battery Storage at HTC to Full Council at its next meeting on 14 December 2021.***

**F4768 Update on funding application lodged through the 'SCC Your Fund' Community to support the cost of the project.**

The Town Clerk said that the project had received 50 likes on the Common Place map for the Surrey Your Fund. It had been publicised in all the usual places but more likes indicating more local support were needed if the project was to succeed in attracting a grant from the Surrey Your Fund.

***RESOLVED: Noted.***

**F 4769 Horley Town Council Precept**

The RFO gave a presentation covering the context for the consideration of the Annual Budget and Precept. Some of the general considerations were that :-

- **The council cannot set a deficit budget**
- For financial security the target should be to increase the General Reserve
- A general inflationary increase of 3% was recommended for all budgets
- Energy prices increases were anticipated

- Anticipated increases in rolling contracts we have already been notified of increases of between 2.5 and 3 %
- Increased salary costs, inc. changes to NI and/or pensions contribution rates (yet unknown)
- Maintenance of Assets
- Contracts coming up for renewal – grounds maintenance

Members would also need to consider future priorities and projects.

As the housing number had not yet been received from RBBC the RFO was unable to present complete Precept scenarios for consideration, but the detailed Budgets were carefully considered. Members made the following comments: -

- The budget for the rates was higher than expenditure and could be reduced to match expenditure.
- Members queried the high cost of the photocopier and Cllrs Marr and Saunders volunteered to help investigate whether there was a possible saving to be made.
- As agreed by the L&A committee the Allotments income budget should be increased by 3%

Subject to these modifications the detailed budgets for 2022/23 were agreed.

***RESOLVED: that the detailed budgets be recommended to Full Council as the agreed basis for the draft 2022/23 Precept.***

#### **Surrey Association of Local Councils (SALC) and National Association of Local Councils (NALC)**

**F 4770** A briefing had been received prior to the meeting from Dr Richard Olliver, Vice President of the Surrey Association of Local Councils. Among other things he encouraged Members to actively use the website, he promoted the worthwhile training programme for Members and referred to the latest Annual Report.

***RESOLVED: Noted that a briefing and update on the work of the newly formed Surrey ALC was received from Dr Richard Olliver, Vice President of the Surrey Association of Local Councils earlier in the evening.***

**F 4771**

***RESOLVED: Noted that the Town Council's subscriptions to Surrey ALC and NALC for 2022/23 is £3,183.39 (Surrey ALC: £1,750, NALC: £1,433.39).***

#### **Updates on any other matters from the National and County Associations.**

The Town Clerk gave an overview of previously circulated information including the following:

- F 4772**
- The Chair of NALC took part in an online ministerial roundtable hosted by Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC),
  - This meeting provided an opportunity for NALC to provide feedback on the recent Spending Review.
  - At a further meeting on the Community Ownership Fund NALC continued to press for the range of eligible bodies to be widened to include local (parish and town) councils.
  - At a meeting with officials from LUHC's stakeholder engagement team NALC took the opportunity to discuss improving awareness and understanding across government, the forthcoming levelling up and recovery white paper and key issues facing the sector, including remote council meetings, access to funding and standards.

**RESOLVED: Noted**

**F 4773 HTC Operational Matters**

**RESOLVED: that the expenditure to re-plant the additional failed sections of the Bowling Club Hedge in the total sum of £1471.22 plus VAT, following receipt of the amended quotation be ratified.**

**F 4774 Letters Received**

The Town Clerk said that an email had been received from Surrey County Council regarding further funding for trees. The criteria included that;

1. The planting will contribute to increased ecological resilience, provide benefits to local biodiversity, ecological connectivity and/or people. Ideally, the planting would occur where the public may enjoy the trees.
2. The fund aims to address a historical decline in trees caused by various factors and more recently exacerbated by ash dieback.
3. This includes planting trees on Parish Council owned or managed land (with permission) in hedgerows, parklands, riparian zones, urban areas, beside roads and footpaths as well as in areas of neglected green space, small linear woodlands, Copses, orchards and shelterbelts; This would likely exclude highways land.

SCC would provide and deliver the trees for the Council to undertake planting and the essential watering and aftercare. A total of 110 trees were being offered and a response was required by 14 December.

**RESOLVED: that the offer be accepted and that the planting take place on Tanyard Meadows subject to RBBC permission.**

The Chairman said that she had received an email from the RBBC Mayor seeking Horley representation at the RBBC Mayor's Trust Fund fundraising quiz to be held on 26 November. It is the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Fund which was set up by a RBBC Mayor from Horley.

**RESOLVED: noted.**

**F 4775 Diary Dates**

Remembrance Rededication Wednesday 10 November – Memorial Gardens  
Remembrance Minutes Silence Thursday 11 November – Town Centre  
Remembrance Parade and Service Sunday 14 November – Town and Memorial Gardens  
Residents Forum 23 November – Albert Rooms  
HTMG 29 November - Virtual  
Planning 16 November – Albert Rooms  
Leisure 30 November – Albert Rooms

**RESOLVED: noted.**

**Meeting closed at 20:43pm**

**Date of Next Meeting – 25 January 2022**