

HALEWOOD TOWN COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Policy & Finance Committee held on Thursday 29th January 2009, the following members were

PRESENT
COUNCILLORS
Mrs. S Powell (Chairman)

Mrs. D Birch
H Birch
Ms. C Harris
N Hogg

Mrs. S Moretta
T Powell
Mrs. S Smithson
D Smithson

R Swann

Also in attendance:

J Green, Town Manager
L Joyner, Senior Administrator
Members of the Public - 0

APOLOGIES

Apologies for non-attendance were received from Councillors T Fearn and Mrs. S Smith.

153. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

The following declarations of interest were received:-

Cllr. Mrs. D Birch	Agenda item 18(a) & 18(b) Planning Decisions/Applications
Cllr. H Birch	Agenda item 18(a) & 18(b) Planning Decisions/Applications
Cllr. N Hogg	Agenda item 18(a) & 18(b) Planning Decisions/Applications
Cllr. D Smithson	Agenda item 18(a) & 18(b) Planning Decisions/Applications

154. PUBLIC FORUM

No items received.

155. MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Policy & Finance meeting held on 20th November 2008, be approved as a correct record.

156. TOWN MANAGER'S INFORMATION UPDATE

The Town Manager circulated a report on recent issues appertaining to the Town Council and gave an update on the undermentioned items:-

- (i) Myerscough College – Proposed Apprentices Work Experience
- (ii) Annual Report 2008-2009
- (iii) NALC “Stepping Stones” Event – Saturday 21st February, York.
- (iv) The Halewood Centre – Closing time for meetings

RESOLVED: that the report be noted. (A copy of the report is filed with the minutes).

157. SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT AS A RESULT OF INTERNAL AUDITORS COMMENTS REGARDING THE REVISED ESTIMATES 2008/2009 AND BUDGET 2009/2010

The Town Manager circulated a report together with comments from the Internal Auditor that the Committee may wish to consider prior to setting the precept for 2009/10.

RESOLVED: (i) that the supplementary report of the Town Manager be noted.
(A copy of the report is filed with the minutes).

(ii) that the comments made by the Internal Auditor, prior to considering the level of precept to be sent for 2009/2010, which is the subject of the following report at this meeting, and the impact on future years should a standstill budget be approved for 2009/2010, be noted.

158. REVISED ESTIMATES 2008/2009 AND BUDGET 2009/2010

The Town Manager presented the revised estimates for 2008/9 and the proposed budget for 2009/10. (A copy of the report is filed with the minutes).

It was proposed by Cllr. D Smithson and seconded by Cllr. N Hogg, that the Committee recommend a standstill precept of £316,905.

RESOLVED: (i) that the revised estimates for 2008/9 and the estimated Town Fund balances at 31.03.09. be approved.

(ii) that the base estimates for 2009/10 and further expenditure options be agreed, and a precept of £316,905, representing a standstill precept with additional new reserves of £6160 and a further £422, be allocated to the general reserve fund, making £50,422 in total. (Paragraph 8 (ii) of the Town Manager's report).

(iii) that the decision of this Committee be referred to the next meeting of the Town Council on 19th February 2009, for ratification.

159. REVIEW OF MEETING STRUCTURE AND SCHEME OF FINANCIAL DELEGATION – UPDATE

The Committee considered the report of the Town Manager that outlined options for a new Meeting Structure and Scheme of Financial Delegation. It was noted that any change would be effective from the new municipal year.

A discussion took place about the benefits to the Council of having one Council Meeting per month as opposed to the current structure and the savings that may be achieved by adopting this structure. Cllr. D Smithson spoke in support of abolishing the two standing committees and replacing with one Council Meeting each month. Having noted the Town Manager's advice from NALC regarding the use of electronic mailing system, Cllr. Smithson indicated that other Council's are using electronic mailing systems and the Town Council should consider investigating this item further.

RESOLVED: (a) that the report be noted. (A copy of the report is filed with the minutes).

(b) that with effect from the next Council year the two standing Committees be abolished and a full Council Meeting be held each month, (except August), and to amend Standing Orders and Financial Regulations to reflect this.

(c) that the limit of £2,500 be set for financial delegation to the Town Manager, and the Standing Orders/Financial Regulations be amended accordingly.

(d) that a decision on the introduction of an optional electronic mailing system be deferred until further information is received.

(e) that it be noted that the intention to incorporate into Standing Orders, any future amendments to previous council minutes, will have an annotation incorporated into the original minutes, which appear on the Town Council website.

(f) that the new Meeting Structure take place for a trial period of 12 months and be subject to review after nine months.

(g) that the Meeting Structure Working Group monitor and review the new meeting structure during the year.

160. RISK ASSESSMENT 2009 – HALEWOOD TOWN COUNCIL

The Annual Risk Assessment update was presented. (A copy of the report is filed with the minutes).

RESOLVED: (i) that the report be noted.

(ii) that standing order no. 4 (contracts) be waived, thus allowing AON Risk Services Limited to continue to obtain quotations for cost effective insurance cover.

(iii) that the undertaking of a risk assessment of the Town Council, with a view to identifying potential areas of risk, and remedies to resolve them, be noted.

(iv) that the “Risk Management Strategy” (Appendix One of the report) as evidence of the Town Council identifying and managing risk, be approved.

(v) that approval be granted to continue with the annual agreement with Rawlings Consultancy Services, to act as Health & Safety Advisor to the Town Council for 2009.

161. EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL AUDIT REVIEW 2008-2009

The Town Manager reported that in accordance with new Account and Audit regulations a template is now in place and a review of the internal audit function has now been undertaken. The Town Manager reported that he has shared the information with both Group Leaders and the Internal Auditor who are happy with the content.

RESOLVED: (i) that the report be noted. (A copy of the report is filed with the minutes).

(ii) that the comments of the working group who have undertaken the Review of the Effectiveness of the Internal Auditor, be noted, and passed to the Internal Auditor.

(iii) that the attached document be submitted to the External Auditor as part of the Audit Return for 2008-2009.

(iv) that the key months for the reports involving the Internal Auditor for future financial years, be noted.

162. POLICY FOR FOOTBALL PITCH ALLOCATION (OPEN AGE)

The Committee considered the report of the Town Manager together with details of a draft policy for the allocation of football pitches. The policy has been created to be used in situations where the demand for pitches exceeds the availability.

RESOLVED: (a) that the report be noted. (A copy of the report is filed with the minutes).

(b) that the draft policy for the allocation of football pitches be adopted subject to the following paragraph being included at Stage 2

“that the Town Council positively encourage all teams (both youth and open age), to sign up for the Football Association’s “Respect” campaign. In addition, the Town Council will be monitoring levels of behaviour of teams, and also ensure that the area is left in a litter free manner. Your co- operation is greatly appreciated”.

(c) that the Town Manager provide a copy of the agreed allocation criteria policy, to all existing “open-age” teams using the Hollies Road pitches in 2008-2009.

163. PROPOSED HIRE CHARGES & TARIFF 2009/2010

A price review of the Council’s hire charges, tariffs, and existing concessionary use, was considered by the Committee. It was noted that the last price review was effective from 1st April 2007.

RESOLVED: (a) that the report be noted. (A copy of the report is filed with the minutes)

(b) that in view of the current economic climate, no increase be made to the hire/tariff charges, and the situation be reviewed in 12 months time.

164. CONSIDERATION OF A CHANGE OF POLICY FOR THE HIRE OF EITHER COMMUNITY CENTRE FOR A FUNERAL RECEPTION

The Town Manager presented a report regarding the policy for hire of the Town Council’s facilities for funeral functions.

RESOLVED: (a) that the report be noted. (A copy of the report is filed with the minutes)

(b) that the policy for such funeral receptions be changed to incorporate a maximum hire period of five hours for such events.

(c) that the new policy, that includes free hire, relates to Halewood residents and their immediate family only.

(d) That existing block bookings at the Centres continue to take precedence over funeral reception requests.

165. HELPING HALEWOOD RESIDENTS DURING THE CURRENT ECONOMIC CLIMATE

The report of the Town Manager was considered.

RESOLVED: (a) that the report be noted. (A copy of the report is filed with the minutes).

(b) that a Working Group (comprising of two representatives, from each political group) be formed, to review ways in which Halewood Town Council can assist residents of Halewood during these difficult economic times, and to receive a formal report on the findings at a subsequent meeting.

166. THE POWER OF THE PROMOTION OF ECONOMIC, SOCIAL OR ENVIRONMENTAL WELL BEING

It was reported that a power of well-being is to be introduced for certain Town and Parish Councils as a result of S.2 of the Local Government Act 2000.

RESOLVED: (a) that the report be noted. (A copy of the report is filed with the minutes).

(b) that a further report be presented in the near future when further details are available, including training.

167. SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS

RESOLVED: that the schedule of accounts amounting to £2,514.51 be approved for payment.

168. REPORTS OF CONFERENCES/REPRESENTATIVE BODIES

Cllr. D Smithson reported that he had attended a meeting of the LALC Executive Committee. Discussions took place at the meeting about training for members in relation to the new power of well-being, and who the training provider will be.

RESOLVED: that the reports be noted.

169. CORRESPONDENCE

Note: Cllr. Mrs. D Birch, Cllr. H Birch, Cllr. N Hogg, Cllr. D Smithson, having declared an interest, left the meeting during the discussion of agenda item 18(a) Planning Decisions and 18(b) Planning Applications.

(a) KMBC - Planning Decisions

RESOLVED: that the list of planning decisions, up to week ending 23 February 2009, be noted.

(b) KMBC - Planning Applications

RESOLVED: that the planning applications for the period up to week ending 23 February 2009, be noted.

170. EXEMPT ITEM

RESOLVED: that under section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

171. AMENDMENT TO CONTRACTED HOURS – PART-TIME CLEANER, HOLLIES HALL

The Town Manager requested that the Committee consider increasing the contracted hours of Mrs. SM who is employed as a part-time Cleaner in Hollies Hall. It was reported that Mrs. SM had, for personal reasons, decreased her contract hours to 6 hours per week in May 2005, and has now requested that the contract be amended to 12 hours per week to reflect the hours she currently covers. It was noted that the demand for daytime use and for private functions has increased since the refurbishment of the Hall in 2007, and that there would be no increase in costs to the Town Council as a result of amending the contact.

RESOLVED: (a) that the report be noted. (A copy of the report is filed with the minutes)

(b) that with effect from 1st February 2009 the contract be amended from 6 hours per week, to 12 hours per week.

Meeting closed at 8.40 p.m.

Signed:

Dated: