

Minutes of Parish Councils' Liaison Committee

Meeting Date: Thursday, 27 September 2012, starting at 6.30pm
Present: P Young (Chairman)

Councillors:

P Ainsworth	S Hore
I Brown	G Mirfin
R Hargreaves	E M H Ranson
T Hill	I Sayers

Parish Representatives:

M Cartwright	Aighton Bailey & Chaigley
J Porter	Bolton-by-Bowland, Gisburn Forest & Sawley
B Redhead	Clayton-le-Dale
A Schofield	Clayton-le-Dale
A Yearling	Clitheroe
F Priest	Longridge
N Walsh	Mellor
T Nelson	Ramsgreave
A Mashiter	Read
C Pollard	Read
A Ormand	Ribchester
R A Whittaker	Rimington & Middop
M Calvert	Sabden
P Cook	Slaidburn & Easington
I R Hirst	Simonstone
R K Jackson	Waddington
C Cherry	West Bradford
M J Highton	Whalley
T Gaffney	Wilpshire
M Farrant	Wiswell

In attendance: Chief Executive, Solicitor.

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APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Borough Councillors R Newmark, M Robinson, C Ross, G Scott, R Swarbrick and D Taylor and from the following Parish Representatives:

H Douglas	Chatburn
P Morey	Hothersall
P Entwistle	Grindleton
G Parkinson	Longridge
S Rawsthorne	Newsholme and Paythorne
G Melloy	Simonstone
K Staines	Waddington
J Bremner	Wilpshire

364 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2012 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

365 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interests.

366 MATTERS ARISING

- (a) Minute 105(a) – Simonstone Parish Council – Compliance with Planning Conditions

A Parish Representative questioned why this matter had been referred to the Three Tier Forum rather than being discussed at this Committee. The Chief Executive explained that it was felt that, as this was an issue which was mainly of interest to Simonstone Parish Council and involved the actions of the County Surveyor it was relevant to refer it to the Three Tier Forum.

- (b) Minute 105(b) – Bolton-by-Bowland – Theft of Speed Indicator Device

A Parish Representative asked whether grant funding was available for Speed Indicator Devices. The Chief Executive reported that Village Amenity Grants had been available to all Parish Councils but the deadline had now closed and (no grants for Speed Indicator Devices had been applied for). He did indicate, however, that there may be other funding sources which Parish Councils could access for this purposes.

- (c) Minute 106 – Development Management Protocol

The Chief Executive reported that the Head of Planning Services had now decided to make plans available to Parish Councils in the light of comments received at the meeting.

- (d) Minute 108 – Japanese Knotweed

It was reported that the Borough Council had treated Japanese Knotweed on Salesbury Common land. Parishes were reminded that if they were aware of any land which needed treating the Council now had the expertise subject to questions on landownership and funding. The window for treatment was in the next few weeks.

- (e) Minute 109 – Subsidised Bus Services in Ribble Valley

It was reported that amongst a number of recent changes to routes, the only one which affected the Ribble Valley was the change of destination of former route 225 from Bolton which would now terminate at Blackburn and would subsequently be renumbered as Service 22. It was also noted that this new service was more frequent.

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LANCASHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

The Chairman introduced Phil Whittaker, the Station Manager at Clitheroe and Longridge Fire Stations. He gave details of the manpower of both stations and how the retained fire fighter system worked. He also detailed the other types of stations across Lancashire which now numbered 39.

He gave details of prevention, protection and response and in particular the work of the Emergency Community Support Officers. He explained about particular campaigns which the Fire and Rescue Service were involved in, including Child Safe, Wasted Lives and Junior Fire Setting. He also mentioned the coming electric blanket safety check, and explained that, at last year's, 71 electric blankets had been tested and 53 of those had been replaced.

Details were given of the Fire and Rescue Services' key performance indicators. He further pointed out that that there been in recent years a number of operational advancements including:

- swift water rescue;
- road traffic collisions;
- road rescue techniques;
- large animal rescue;
- hazardous materials and environmental protection; and
- urban search and rescue.

Members then asked a number of questions including:

- the number of call-outs to Calderstones;
- the problem of gaining access for fire appliances on heavily parked streets;
- response times; and
- consultations on proposed large housing developments.

RESOLVED: That Phil be thanked for his interesting and informative presentation.

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UPDATE ON CODE OF CONDUCT AND STANDARDS

The Council's Solicitor informed Parish Councils of the Council's decision in relation to its Code of Conduct and its impact on Parish Councils. She reminded Members that the Council's Policy and Finance Committee had agreed to make a recommendation to Full Council in relation to adopting a new Code of Conduct and putting arrangements in hand to discharge the Council's obligations relating to maintaining and promoting high standards of conduct by its Members. The Borough Council had elected to use the Department of Communities and Local Government Code. They had also agreed that an explanatory note be included with the Code relating to disposable pecuniary interests.

Parish Councils were free to elect which Code they would like as their Code of Conduct. She had written to all Parish Clerks on the 5 July 2012 explaining this.

All Parish Clerks and Councillors had been invited to attend a training session and 20 Parish Clerks and Councillors had attended.

The Council's Solicitor had since written to all Parish Clerks attaching the new Notification of Interests form that the Council officers had devised in order to comply with the new requirements in respect of disclosable pecuniary interests. She had also asked Parish Clerks to ask their Councillors to fill in the new forms and return them to the Council.

Finally the Borough Council, at its Full Council meeting on 17 July 2012, had also agreed to amend the Terms of Reference of its Accounts and Audit Committee and to appoint two independent persons to assist with standards functions. A Member asked for the names of the two independent persons and the Solicitor informed the meeting that they were Mr B Dearing and Mr I S Taylor.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

369 THREE TIER FORUM

The Chairman gave a resume of the recent meeting held on 22 August 2012. Matters raised included:

- signs about not using satnav at Sunny Bower;
- lack of information on bus routes and recent fare increases;
- number of hot spots where parking was a particular problem;
- repairs to pot holes;
- drainage issues; and
- roll out of superfast broadband to rural villages.

Members then discussed a number of issues, in particular in relation to road closures by United Utilities. The Chief Executive suggested that a representative from United Utilities could be invited to attend the next meeting to explain this policy.

RESOLVED: That the Chief Executive write to United Utilities inviting them to attend at the next meeting to explain their policy in relation to road closures, particularly in rural areas.

370 CHANGES TO COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT

The Chief Executive commented that all Parish Councils were being consulted on proposed changes to Council Tax benefits brought about by the Government. He outlined the three options which the Borough Council was considering as its agreed choice. The changes would be implemented in April 2013 and the Borough Council was consulting other agencies who also levied Council Tax including the County Council, Police and Fire and Rescue Service. At present there was no agreement as to what should be the preferred option. He did stress the importance of responding to the questionnaire.

Members then raised questions about empty properties and the possibility of them being levied in order to gain finance, particularly where they were

unoccupied for a lengthy period. The Chief Executive explained that this was a possibility that was being explored.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

371 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The Chairman reminded Committee that its next meeting would be held on Thursday, 22 November 2012, starting at 6.30pm.

The meeting closed at 7.50pm.

If you have any queries on these minutes please contact Colin Hirst (414503).