



# Skipton Town Council

16/99

## **Finance and Policy Committee** **Thursday 16 February 2017 at 6.30 pm**

Present: Cllrs: C J Harbron (Chairman), R G Heseltine, P H Whitaker, J W Dawson, A F Hickman, Mrs K M<sup>c</sup>Intyre, A Rankine

Also present: Cllr: J Kerr

Officers: Dave Parker (Chief Officer) and Les Chandler (Estate Manager)

Two members of the public.

1. To accept representations from the Public between 7.00 pm and 7.15 pm.

Mr J Launder of the Craven Refugee Support Network advised Members that his group had applied to Craven District Council for permission to hold a march, followed by a rally in the canal basin, to show support for refugees and to express concern about racism and abuses of women's rights. However the District Council had refused permission for the event on the basis that the gathering represented a political protest. He expressed surprise at the District Council's decision because the Support Network is a non-political organisation and the Police had raised no objections. He felt that the proposed rally would be no more of a risk than any of the other events staged regularly in the canal basin. He argued that UK citizens have a right of assembly and the State is obliged to facilitate this right. He advised that the Network is seeking legal advice on the issue and in the meantime had postponed the rally to 18 March. He also noted that the Town Council had objected to the march on the basis of cost and traffic management issues.

Mr A Brown of the Craven Refugee Support Network said that the proposed rally was no more than peaceful people protesting on public land. He said that he understood Members' nervousness about the event but said that banning it would set a dangerous precedent.

2. To accept apologies for absence.

Cllr: C Dow – Work Commitments

3. To record declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests in items on the agenda.

Cllr Hickman declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 8 on the agenda being a member of the Craven Refugee Support Network which had submitted a request to the Council for a road closure order.

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4. To consider the recommendations of the Chief Officer relating to requests for dispensations to Members on items requiring a declaration of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests.

None.

5. To note the minutes from the previous meeting held on 12 January 2017.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the minutes from the Finance and Policy Committee meeting held on 12 January 2017 as a true and accurate record of what transpired at that meeting.

6. To report information arising from the minutes of items not on the agenda from members and the Chief Officer.

None.

It was **RESOLVED** to bring forward Item 8.

8. To consider the Council's approach towards the provision of road closure and traffic management services.

Given that the Town Council has no protocol against which to assess applications for road closures and traffic management it was **RESOLVED** that the Chief Officer should present, to a future meeting of the Committee, a set of principles which could form the basis of a policy to be applied to all requests for road closures.

After discussion it was **AGREED** that any future policy should define the types of events the Council could provide road closure services for and any applicable charges.

It was also **AGREED** that the Council should not provide road closure and traffic management services for events which risk public disorder or disruption to trade.

7. To determine the arrangements for Highways Verge Grass Cutting in 2017-18.

Councillor Mrs McIntyre declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item being an employee of Yorkshire Housing which has submitted a quotation for highways verge grass-cutting services.

Because it can be delivered more cheaply and effectively in-house it was **RESOLVED** that the Council should hire a ride-on mower, purchase additional hand-mowing, blowing and strimming equipment, and create additional storage space at its East Castle Street Depot, to enable highways verge grass-cutting to be undertaken by its groundstaff in 2017.

It was also **RESOLVED** that the Council should review the delivery of highways verge grass-cutting services at the end of the 2017 growing season to assess whether they should remain in-house or be re-outsourced.

9. To receive updates from the Chief Officer on the Council's review of staffing arrangements and the potential sale of land at North Parade.

Staffing structure: Members noted that three different options for the Council's staffing structure have been developed and detailed job descriptions are now being drawn up for each of the identified posts. The options will be presented to the Staffing Working Group for consideration. The chosen option will be subject to staff consultation and job evaluation, and a migration plan will be developed to ensure a smooth transition to the new structure.

Sale of land at North Parade: the developer has indicated that he may wish to renegotiate the terms of the sale but has yet to confirm this.

To consider excluding press and public for the remainder of item 9 on the grounds that it relates to confidential matters.

It was **RESOLVED** that in accordance with Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable and in the public interest that the press and public be asked to withdraw.

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It was **RESOLVED** to re-admit the press and public.

10. To receive notification of matters that members would like including on a future agenda.

None.

The meeting closed at 7.40 pm.