

Minutes of Council

Meeting Date: Tuesday, 13 December 2022, starting at 6.30 pm
Present: Councillor S Hirst (Chair)

Councillors:

T Austin	B Holden
J Alcock	S Hore
S Atkinson	K Horkin
D Berryman	G Mirfin
S Bibby	R Newmark
D Birtwhistle	S O'Rourke
A Brown	D Peat
I Brown	S Rainford
S Carefoot	M Robinson
J Clark	J Rogerson
L Edge	J Schumann
S Farmer	G Scott
S Fletcher	R Sherras
M French	R Thompson
J Hill	R Walsh
M Hindle	

In attendance: Chief Executive, Director of Community Services, Director of Economic Development and Planning, Director of Resources and Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Not in attendance: Councillor R Bennett

542 PRAYERS

The Mayor's Chaplain, Reverend Liz McLean opened the meeting with prayers.

543 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of Councillors S Brunskill, B Buller, R Elms, A Humphreys and D O'Rourke.

544 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

545 DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY, OTHER REGISTRABLE AND NON REGISTRABLE INTERESTS

Councillor K Horkin declared ownership of businesses in Clitheroe.

546 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

There was no public participation.

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MAYORAL COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor reported on a wide range of events that he had attended since the last meeting, and in particular his charity Ball.

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STAFF RETIREMENTS

The Mayor presented gifts to Colin Hirst, John Heap and Olwen Heap to mark their imminent retirement from the Council. He commented appropriately upon their years of service with the Council.

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LEADER'S REPORT

The Leader started by informing the Council that he and the Chief Executive had attended a Lancashire Day celebration at the Speaker's House in the new Palace of Westminster where the Lancashire 2050 devolution prospectus was launched to Lancashire MPs and the media. This devolution would bring new powers and responsibilities to Lancashire without RVBC losing any of its functions and powers.

A crucial part of the devolution agenda was levelling up and the Leader was delighted to announce that the council had received confirmation from the DLUHC that it had been successful in unlocking £259,000 from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund for this financial year. He informed the members that the working group had already met to start work on ideas for schemes to put forward.

The Leader went on to speak about the proposed changes to the Parliamentary constituency boundaries where it was proposed to move numerous wards including Clitheroe into the Clitheroe and Pendle seat. Along with the Chief Executive and Leader of the Opposition a letter had been sent to the Boundary Commission expressing the Council's concerns. He reminded members that it was important to remember that these proposed changes did not affect the Ribble Valley Borough Council boundaries, and that the council offices would remain in Clitheroe and day to day services would remain unaffected.

He also informed Council that the Lancashire County Council had submitted plans to government for investment for Zones throughout the County. This Council had not put forward further allocations except the existing site at Samlesbury. It was felt that our areas of outstanding natural beauty should be protected.

Another aspect to be protected referred to by the Leader was historic buildings, and he used the example of the Punch Bowl that had been demolished without permission and resulted in five guilty verdicts in court.

The Leader went on to say that the Council was in the best financial health to face the prevailing economic uncertainty having paid off all debts and having significant reserves.

Grant assistance continues to be provided, including food vouchers to those most vulnerable. He also referred to supporting the local economy with free parking for Clitheroe and Longridge on Saturdays in December before Christmas, and the help for first-time buyers to undertake crucial renovations.

He informed Council that a dedicated consultant had been appointed to help with achieving an updated Core Strategy before the end of 2023.

The Leader thanked Colin Hirst, John Heap and Olwen Heap for their contribution and service to the Council and wished them well on their retirements.

Lastly, the Leader referred to the film recently filmed in Clitheroe – We are not alone.

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LEADER'S QUESTION TIME

The Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Stewart Fletcher asked the Leader if he believed the measures surrounding the introduction of voter ID for the elections in May 2023 were proportionate; whether the Council was prepared to implement the voter ID certificates and what the Council was doing to inform the public about the new voting requirements.

The Leader responded that although the current election system was probably the best in the world, politicians in Westminster obviously had concerns about illegal voting and had therefore legislated to bring in voter identification. He felt confident that officers would be able to implement the requirement albeit very challenging. He also reported that the Local Government Association had asked that the changes be delayed.

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COMMITTEE MINUTES

1. Community Services committee – 18 October 2022
2. Planning and Development committee – 20 October 2022
3. Personnel committee – 26 October 2022
4. Health and Housing committee – 27 October 2022
5. Licensing committee – 1 November 2022
6. Economic Development committee – 3 November 2022
7. Policy & Finance committee – 8 November 2022
8. Parish Councils Liaison committee – 10 November 2022
9. Accounts & Audit committee – 23 November 2022
10. Emergency committee – 29 November 2022
11. Special Policy & Finance committee – 29 November 2022
12. Planning and Development committee – 1 December 2022

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the above committees be received with the exception of Minute number 466.

Minute 466 – Whistleblowing Policy

RESOLVED:

That the Council endorse the Whistleblowing Policy.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no items under this heading.

The meeting closed at 7.15 pm

If you have any queries on these minutes please contact the committee clerk, Olwen Heap olwen.heap@ribblevalley.gov.uk.