



HORLEY TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Horley Town Council held on Tuesday 10 December 2024 at 7.30 pm

Present

Cllrs	Hannah Avery	Lynne Burnham	Cecilia Hughes
	Jante Baird	Victoria Chester	Robert Marr
	James Baker	Lynnette Easterbrook	Samantha Marshall
	Keith Barlow	Emma Fagan	Martin Saunders (Chairman)
	Jordan Beech	Mike George	Tom Turner (Vice Chairman)
	Michael Blacker	Jerry Hudson	Steve Wotton

* Absent

In Attendance

J Walsh (Town Clerk)
S Adeniji (Assistant Town Clerk & RFO)

C 5957

Apologies and Reasons for Absence

RESOLVED: *that apologies received from Cllrs Blacker, Burnham and Fagan be accepted.*

C 5958

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Non-Pecuniary Interests

Cllrs Avery, Baker, Hudson, Chester and Wooton declared a Non-Pecuniary interest in **Agenda item 17 ii RBBC Draft Budget Proposals consultation**, as they are all elected Members of Reigate & Banstead Borough Council.

RESOLVED: *noted.*

C 5959

Public Forum

One member of the public was present to observe the meeting.

RESOLVED: *noted.*

C 5960

Minutes

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on [29 October 2024](#) be approved.

Full Council Updates

C 5961

C 5926 – C 5928: HTC Scale of Charges 2025/26

The Town Clerk reported that the April 2025 increases (comprising pitch hire at Court Lodge Playing Fields; allotment tenancies at Church Road and Langshott; advertisement banner displays and land hire at Horley Recreation Ground; and community hall hire (Edmonds Hall) at the Albert Rooms) will be published on the Council's website after notifications to hirers had been made.

C5934 Council Grant Application: Café Milk CIO

The Town Clerk reported that there had been a slight delay in processing the Café Milk CIO grant due to the applicant not responding to enable the payment be processed but this had since been resolved.

RESOLVED: *noted.*

Committee Reports

C 5962

RESOLVED: *that the Draft minutes of the meeting of the Leisure and Amenities Committee held on 15 October 2024 be received.*

C 5963

RESOLVED: *that the minutes of the meeting of the Planning & Development Committee held on 22 October be received.*

C 5964

Council Chairman's Report

The Chairman's Report, previously circulated to Members for information, was received.

RESOLVED: noted.

C 5965

Surrey Association of Local Councils (SALC) & National Association (NALC)

SALC: Cllr George gave the following updates in his capacity as a SALC Board Director:

- **AGM & Conference:** The event was held at Silvermere Golf Club, a different venue to previous years. The detailed programme included updates from the NALC Chair and Senior Policy Manager on the benefits of membership and guide for councils on AI use; forthcoming legislative changes in employment law, remote meetings and proxy voting reforms; and update from the SCC Director of Environment and Local Nature Recovery Lead on 'working collaboratively to enable a greener future in Surrey'.

NALC: The Town Clerk gave the following updates:

- The next SALC Councillor Forum will be held on 22 January at 7.30 pm with the Clerk Forum on the preceding day. There would be key updates from SALC provided and SCC Highways representatives would be in attendance to share information on [Surrey Highways Fix My Street](#) reporting for issues concerning pot holes, flooding, trees etc; and an SCC to Highways and Transport reference guide for local councils.
- NALC has issued a useful checklist on Martin's Law to help prepare with new measures to protect users of a community building. This is under review by HTC to ensure all legal requirements are met.

RESOLVED: noted.

C 5966

Borough, County Council and Other Updates

SCC/RBBC/HTC Joint Council Meeting – 20 January 2025

The Town Clerk reported that the December meeting had been postponed as there was no urgent business to discuss. The next meeting on 20 January will focus on current important topics, including Planning System reform; and the [Devolution White Paper](#) in regard to a Level 2 deal for Surrey.

RESOLVED: noted.

C 5967

RBBC/HTC Liaison Meeting – 26 November 2024

The Town Clerk reported that the draft minutes of the meeting held on 26 November had been received. Among the items for discussion were an update on progression of outstanding infrastructure and public facilities at Westvale Park development; HTC's collaboration with RBBC on the [Horley Open Spaces & Facilities survey](#) (now open until 20 January 2025); defibrillator provision through a proposed combined roll-out plan; and the position regarding the public toilets at Consort Way which remains closed for several months and a decision on refurbishment or withdrawal by the borough council as a non-statutory service (yet to be made known).

RESOLVED: noted.

C 5968

Internal Audit Matters

The Asst Town Clerk/RFO advised that the first internal audit for 2024/25 was very positive and noted a strong commitment by HTC to financial management overall and robust governance procedures. There were no recommendations made in the report.

RESOLVED: noted.

The Finance Lead Member, Cllr Jordan Beech gave a detailed introduction to Council, advising that the budgets had been carefully scrutinised at both the Leisure Committee meeting and at the previous Council meeting held on 29 October 2024. The Finance Working Group since met to scrutinise the outcome of those meetings and to consider the Council's needs and commitments as well as planning for some future projects identified in the Town Plan.

The budgets had been prepared with the following key considerations:

- The CPI inflation rate of 1.7%;
- A beneficial rise of 0.9% in the Council Tax Base from 11186 to 11286;
- RBBC would continue to honour the previous double taxation agreement, capped at a 4% rise, giving an anticipated income of £48,452 for 25/26; and
- A predicted underspend of £50k (made from the staffing budget and bank interest). £30k of this amount had been used to offset the 2025/26 expenditure and the remaining £20k will be added to General Reserves.

The Finance Working Group has considered the following key challenges for 2025/26:

- A benchmark increase of 1.7% was applied to most costs, based on September's CPI. However, inflation has since risen to 2.3% and is projected to increase further by the time the budget takes effect in 2025/26. Alongside this, the rise in National Insurance contributions means that costs are expected to exceed the 1.7% increase initially projected for 2025/26.
- The Office Expansion and Sustainability EMF currently has a budget of £483,797, which includes contributions from RBBC and HTC. However, due to the absence of an accurate cost estimate and the ongoing impact of inflation, the final cost to complete the project remains uncertain. As a result, it is advisable to propose that the Council earmark additional funds in the 2025/26 budget to ensure the project can be completed without delay. Any unspent funds from this EMF will be returned to General Reserves at the end of the 2025/26 financial year.
- This year has been exceptionally productive for the Town Council, with multiple capital projects successfully delivered, thanks to funding from the RBBC Strategic Infrastructure Programme (SIP) and Surrey County Council's Your Fund Surrey for Community Projects. The Council is actively pursuing additional grant applications, so it is crucial that funds are set aside to meet any match-funding requirements for these projects.
- In addition to the office expansion, both the Albert Rooms and Edmonds Hall are currently in need of significant refurbishment, which are separate from the office expansion project. This year, £20,000 was allocated from the Edmonds Hall EMF to replace the hall's windows. As a result, the Edmonds Hall EMF has been depleted and will require replenishment to cover future repair needs.

Cllr Beech presented two possible scenarios in regard to the Annual Budget and Precept 2025/26 for Members consideration. He recommended scenario A with an increase of 2.24% which he considered to be a realistic scenario given the Council's needs and commitments. This would result in an annual increase in parish council tax of £1.21 per Band D household or 2.3p per week.

Cllr Beech further outlined that this scenario will allow the Council to invest for the future and enable financial management to:

- Allocate £20,000 to the Edmonds Hall Earmarked Fund and rename this earmarked fund as Albert Rooms Earmarked Fund.
- Replenish the Parks and Playgrounds Earmarked Fund with £20,000 to bring it back up to £40k.
- Earmark additional funds in the 2025/26 budget to the Office Expansion Earmarked Fund to ensure the project can be completed without disruption.

C 5969)

Any unspent funds for his EMF would flow back into General Reserves at the end of the 2025/26 financial year. It is proposed that a minimum sum of £50,000 should be added to this EMF.

- Set up an Earmarked Fund to cover project part-funding contributions. The sum of £10,000 has been allocated to the Project Funding Earmarked Fund.

He added that another benefit in investing in replacing ageing infrastructure and becoming more energy efficient would be long term savings in running costs which Members supported.

After final deliberations, Cllr George proposed and Cllr Easterbrook seconded that the Precept be set at £623,148 (scenario A), as the most sensible way forward, allowing the Council to invest in the future whilst maintaining prudent financial management. Members agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED: that a Precept of £ 623,148 be set for the Financial Year 2025/26, representing £55.21 per Band D household, an annual increase of £1.21 (+ 2.24% increase) and Reigate & Banstead Borough Council to be informed accordingly as the Council Tax Authority.

C 5970

Budget Statement 2024/25

Cllr Beech recited the draft Budget Statement (copy appended) and this was agreed, subject to a minor addition put forward by Cllr Marr about the purpose of the CIL SIP 2.18 HTC Office Expansion project, as part of strategic planning by the council for long-term investments and addressing future sustainability at all sites. He concluded his address by thanking officers for their hard work throughout the year in preparing for the draft Annual Budget and Precept setting and to the Finance Working Group for their participation which had also been supported by Cllr Saunders and Cllr Turner throughout the detailed process.

RESOLVED: that the draft Budget Statement 2025/26 be approved (subject to a minor addition on the Council's strategic planning for long-term investment and future sustainability) and published.

C 5971

Annual Subscriptions

RESOLVED: That the annual subscription charge to Gatwick Greenspace Partnership (GGP) for 2025/26, in the total sum of £2,350, be ratified.

C 5972

Community Foundation for Surrey (CFS) – Horley Edmonds Community Fund (HECF)

Revised Scale of charges:

The Town Clerk reported that the Trustees of the Community Foundation for Surrey (CFS) had announced their revised scale of charges for administering Endowment Funds, advising that this is the first increase in 10 years. There will be an annual increase from 1.5% to 2% up to a 250k threshold from 1 April 2025 and there will be no charge applied for donations to grow existing endowments. A number of Members expressed concern about the increase, but they were understanding of the increase as the organisation provides a valuable service but would wish to see this stabilised in future years with increases for administration charges kept to an absolute minimum. The Town Clerk would inform the foundation accordingly.

RESOLVED: that the annual increase in administration charge (1.5%) by the Community Foundation of Surrey, for administering the Horley Edmonds Community (Endowment) Fund, effective from 1 April 2025, be approved and the foundation notified accordingly.

C 5973

HECF Grant Award – St Bartholomew's Church (Lychgate Repair):

C 5973) The Town Clerk reported that St Bart's Church had notified the Council of difficulties in securing further funds from other donors to carry out the Lychgate repairs and complete the project. They were awarded a grant of £2,300 from the Horley Edmonds Community Fund in June this year. It was thought that they would be unable to complete the renovation works until mid-summer 2025 and therefore required an extension to the 12 month deadline. She added that the situation will be monitored to ensure that the project is completed within the revised timeframe. Members supported the extended date, subject to confirmation being received timely on project completion, or notified otherwise.

RESOLVED: noted.

C 5974 **RBBC Strategic Infrastructure Programme (SIP) 2023-2027: CIL SIP (2) 17, 18, 19, 20**

The Town Clerk gave a general summary of all projects, advising that the Council is on target with all the remaining live projects in accordance with the respective Spending Agreements, as summarised in the programme and timetable which had been previously circulated.

She added that the **CIL SIP (2) 17 HTC Office Expansion & Sustainability** project is on target at Stage 3 with the appointed architects assisting RBBC and SCC on Bio-Diversity Net Gain and Tree Conservation queries and the LPA must be content for the Planning Application to be determined. The LPA Tree Officer raised concerns about tree encroachment on the extra car park spaces proposed and recommended that three car parking spaces be eliminated in the proposed extension, reducing capacity to 20 bays in total. Once Planning approval is received, then Phases 4 and 5 would follow for the Technical Design package and full tender on Contracts Finder, subject to Council approval (to be covered in Part 2 of the meeting).

RESOLVED: noted.

C 5975 **Residents survey for Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Projects in Horley**

The Town Clerk reported that a sample survey (previously implemented) had been shared with Members. Under CIL funding regulations, the Council is required to conduct a residents' survey and invite views on community projects. Members were supportive of the survey under the headings listed but thought the scope should be extended for other suggestions be made while outlining the Town Council's remit for project delivery. The survey will be run in January and the outcomes considered. The Town Clerk added that in view of the amount of projects delivered in the past year, the Council is developing its communications to keep residents updated.

RESOLVED: that the Town Council's CIL Survey be run in January 2025 with the scope extended to include other suggestions, where feasible for the Council to consider.

C 5976 **Outside Bodies**

Horley Community Partnership

It was noted that Cllr George had attended the previous meeting and his detailed meeting notes had been circulated to Members, for information.

RESOLVED: noted.

C 5977 **Royal British Legion (RBL)**

Cllr Marshall said that the RBL AGM minutes had been issued and she thanked all those who supported the Remembrance Service. The Town Clerk added that a letter was received from the Horley branch, thanking the Council for supporting the full programme for another year and the Remembrance Service at the Memorial Gardens.

RESOLVED: noted.

C 5978

Environment Working Group

Cllr Avery advised that the notes from the last meeting held on 3 December 2024 would be shared with Members. The group is looking to expand its activities by inviting a Wildlife Trust representative to its next meeting to give advice on what the group could do to support the environment.

RESOLVED: noted.

C 5979

RBBC Consultation on Budget Proposals 2025/26 (Closing Date: 13 January 2025)

The Asst Town Clerk/RFO reported that the Borough Council is inviting views on its budget proposals for 2025/26 which, in summary, include:

- Encouraging wider use of community centres to generate more income, including room hire.
- Making savings through the removal of vacant staff posts.
- Increasing some locally set fees and charges, so as to continue to cover the costs of service delivery.
- Creating new income generating posts in the Revenues, Benefits and Fraud Prevention service.
- Expected additional rental income from Council owned properties.
- Increased costs for information and communication technology and software.
- Increasing overall funding for salaries to cover contractual and cost of living wage increases for staff.
- Continuing Community Development and Community Safety activity following the end of some external funding.
- Drawing on some Council reserves to deliver objectives and commitments next year.

Members raised concerns about funding for community development and joint enforcement since RBBC seeks to make savings from vacant staff posts. They felt that the Community Development Worker role in Horley should continue. Cllr Saunders asked if funding for refurbishing the public toilets at Consort Way, Horley would be made available and this point would be included in the Town Council's response.

RESOLVED: that the Town Council's response to the Reigate & Banstead Borough Council's Budget Proposals 2025/26, be prepared and submitted by the closing date.

C 5980

RBBC Polling District & Place Statutory Review

RESOLVED: That the Town Council's response to RBBC Polling District & Place Review, be approved (copy appended).

C 5981

RBBC Draft Corporate Plan Review 2025-2030

The Town Clerk reported that the Council's response to Reigate & Banstead Draft Corporate Plan Review 2025-2030 has been submitted and well received. Members thanked her for preparing a very comprehensive response on behalf of HTC.

RESOLVED: That the Town's Council's the Reigate & Banstead Borough Council Draft Corporate Plan Review 2025-2030, be ratified.

C 5982

Public Consultation Remote Meetings and Proxy Voting

The Town Clerk advised that the Government is consulting on proposals for remote attendance at Council meetings and intends to legislate to give local authorities the flexibility to allow elected members to attend formal council meetings remotely. The consultation has been circulated to enable Members respond individually as well as a collective response be sent from the Council. Following discussions, it was felt that remote meetings should be supported, provided that there was at least one third in-person attendance along with Council Officers. However, some concerns were raised about the ability of the Chair and Officers to manage hybrid meetings unless technology is in place to

C 5982) support it. Additionally, even though Members were in favour of remote meetings, they felt that proxy voting should not be introduced to avoid misinterpretation.

RESOLVED: That that Town Council's response to the Government's consultation on Remote Meetings and Proxy Voting be submitted through the survey and ratified at the next Committee meeting.

C 5983 Communications Received

The Asst Town Clerk/RFO reported that a communication had been received regarding a proposal for a Repair Café in Horley and had been responded to accordingly.

RESOLVED: noted.

C 5984 Diary Dates

17 December 2024: Interim Planning.
23 December to 02 January: Office closed for the Christmas period

RESOLVED: noted.

C 5985 Items for Future Consideration

No matters were raised.

RESOLVED: noted.

C 5986 Press Releases

Councillor Christmas Hospitality event on 7 December 2024
Town Council's Budgeted Statement and Precept 2025/26.

RESOLVED: noted.

C 5987 Confidential Minutes

CONFIDENTIAL

RESOLVED: that the Confidential Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on [29 October 2024](#) be approved.

C 5988 'Café In The Park' Occupancy, Horley Recreation Ground

CONFIDENTIAL

Members received an update from the Town Clerk on progress made to date.

RESOLVED: noted.

C 5989 CIL SIP (2) 18: HTC Offices Expansion & Sustainability Project

CONFIDENTIAL

Members were updated on expenditure requirements for the Technical Design package and tender phase of the project.

RESOLVED: noted.

Meeting closed at 9.15 pm. Date of next meeting: 28 January 2025