

HORWICH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Town Council held in the Council Chamber, Public Hall, Lee Lane, Horwich on Thursday 24 March 2016 commencing at 7.15 pm.

PRESENT Councillors: K. Denton (in the Chair), M. Brady, J. Bullock, S. Chadwick, P. Holmes, J. Kellett, K. McKeon, S. Rock, C. Root, K. Schofield, P. Wright.
C. Hutchinson, Town Clerk.
6 members of the public.

CHAIRPERSON TO OUTLINE FIRE SAFETY EVACUATION PROCEDURE:

TC 3371 The Town Mayor outlined the procedure.

TO SUBMIT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND ACCEPT THE REASONS:

TC 3372 Apologies had been received from Councillor Jarvis due to work commitments and from Councillor Allen who was on holiday.
Resolved unanimously to accept the apologies as presented.

TO REMIND MEMBERS TO MAKE A DECLARATION CONCERNING ANY MATTERS TO BE DISCUSSED DURING THE MEETING OF WHICH THEY HAVE AN INTEREST:

TC 3373 None

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT MAY PUT QUESTIONS OR MAKE OBSERVATIONS REGARDING MATTERS IN RELATION TO WHICH THE COUNCIL HAS POWERS OR DUTIES OR WHICH AFFECT THE PARISH. MAXIMUM PERIOD 15 MINUTES:

TC 3374 Resolved unanimously to move out of Committee to allow a member of the public to speak.

Mick Stevens, a member of Friends of Horwich Football and Horwich First stated that although he was broadly supportive of the Council and its Members he expressed the view that Council could be more effective in representing the interests of the community to Bolton Council.

He raised several issues including the loss of the football pitch on the former Horwich college campus, along with the inadequacies of s106 payments and the lack of investment in sporting facilities, in particular the lack of a 3G quality football pitch in Horwich.

He informed Members of concerns about the lack of amenities in the proposed new Horwich Leisure Centre, including the reduction in the pool and seating area and the lack of consultation with the public and groups using the Centre, which may lead to clubs having

to move out of Horwich to other venues in the borough such as Bolton One.

Resolved to move back into Committee. Councillor Chadwick declared a personal interest in any further discussion, as a member of Horwich First.

Mr Stevens was thanked for his comments.

The general view expressed was that the Town Council was receiving unfair criticism for actions that were the remit of Bolton Council.

It was confirmed that £900,000 of s106 funding had already been allocated for future education provision for an estimated 400 primary school children from the Rivington Chase development. This included new two stage entry provision at the new Chorley New Road school along with the expansion of other primary schools. It was confirmed that s 106 monies would be used effectively and the results would become apparent in both education and healthcare with a new Leisure Centre and linked Health Centre on the present Leisure Centre site. Investment was also being made in the Brazley Centre.

In response to a query it was confirmed that the Community College and its playing field had not been owned by Bolton Council since the 1980s when it was sold to a developer, leased and since resold. It was agreed to make a further request to Bolton Council for a copy of the Playing Pitch Strategy

Responding to a query about the proposal for the new Leisure Centre it was confirmed that it was not the intention to force swimming events to go to Bolton One but the new development was responding to the needs of client groups using the Centre, and there was the possibility that the seating area could be increased.

Several Members expressed concerns that there had been a lack of due process with insufficient consultation with groups using the Leisure Centre such as the badminton and swimming club. It was agreed to arrange a meeting of the Sports Group as soon as possible in order to give guidance to the Planning Committee regarding the application for the new Leisure Centre and to ask Jon Gorton to come and speak to Council about the proposed development.

TO DISCUSS AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE VIABILITY OF A
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN FOR HORWICH:

TC 3375 It had been noted that the previous Council had not proceeded with the option of a Neighbourhood Plan which had been part of the Localism Act 2011. A major constraint was that in an area such as Horwich which was included as part of the Core Strategy for the Borough, a Neighbourhood Plan would have to be in line with this. The cost of producing a Neighbourhood Plan had also been an issue of some concern due to the requirement for additional workload at a time when Council had been reducing staff capacity.

There was general agreement that it would be a complicated process with a requirement for additional staff and other costs eg consultancy fees. A view was expressed that Neighbourhood Planning was a means to allow more development in certain areas.

In response to a request for a Neighbourhood Planning group to be set up, Members thought that it was more appropriate to find out more about the possible benefits for the community and how effective Neighbourhood Plans had been in other areas comparable with Horwich. There was some uncertainty about the percentage of town and parish councils who had a NP but it was agreed that comparison with small rural communities or large London boroughs was not a useful exercise. It was agreed to contact similar sized town councils to see how effective their NPs had been and what had been involved. The Town Clerk informed Members that LALC had been contacted for further information and they had suggested contacting either CPRE or Planning Aid.

Resolved by 9 votes to 1 with 1 abstention to obtain more information by invite a suitably qualified person to speak to Council about Neighbourhood Planning and also contact a council of similar size who already have a Neighbourhood Plan in place to advise Council about the viability of a Plan for Horwich.

TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON 18
FEBRUARY 2016:

TC 3376 Resolved unanimously to approve the minutes of the meeting of the Town Council held on 18 February 2016.

TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD
ON 18 FEBRUARY 2016:

TC 3377 Resolved unanimously to note the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 18 February 2016.

TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 14 MARCH 2016:

TC 3378 Resolved unanimously to note the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 14 March 2016.

ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT – SEE ATTACHED LIST:

TC 3379 Resolved unanimously to approve the accounts for payment as presented and amounting to £ 11,565.81.

TO CONFIRM THE DATE FOR THE NEXT MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL AS 21 APRIL 2016:

TC 3380 Resolved unanimously to approve the date of the next meeting of the Town Council as 21 April 2016.

The meeting closed at 8.03 pm.

Chairperson..... Date.....