

HORWICH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held in the Council Chamber, Public Hall, Lee Lane, Horwich on Monday 9 April 2018 commencing at 7.35pm

PRESENT: Councillors: C. Root (in the Chair), M. Brady, J. Bullock, S. Chadwick, K. Denton, R. Graham, J. Kellett, K. McKeon, S. Rock, G. Stone, P. Wright.
Town Clerk, C. Hutchinson
1 member of the public
1 member of the press.

CHAIR TO OUTLINE FIRE SAFETY EVACUATION PROCEDURE:

FG 6809 Councillor Root outlined the procedure from the information provided.

TO SUBMIT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND ACCEPT THE REASONS:

FG 6810 Resolved to accept apologies for absence from Councillors Carruthers, Holmes and Jarvis.

TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 12 MARCH 2018:

FG 6811 Resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 12 March 2018.

Resolved to move the order of business of the meeting to Agenda Item 11.

TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON AND CONSIDER MATTERS REGARDING GREEN LANE PLAYING FIELDS:

FG 6812 Members had received an update on this matter to which Councillor McKeon added further detail. The whole of the Green Lane site is owned by Bolton Council under the remit of the Department of Place and is divided into three sections. The top area is included in the Allocations Plan for future housing development. For many years the other areas have been let out to RBHS with no formal lease agreement but in return for use they have been maintained at a very basic level. As there are no changing facilities at either Lower School or on the playing fields, Year 7 have to go directly to Upper School to use their facilities and are then bussed back to Lower School. The playing fields are let out to local sporting teams, in particular junior football teams. The fields would certainly benefit from extensive improvements but neither Bolton Council nor the school have the funds to finance this work. The precedent exists of other playing fields such as Hilton and Bob's Brew being taken over by local sports clubs with St Mary's JFC providing a good example of how this can be achieved.

This led to the question of who would undertake this, either a group of

established sports clubs or the Town Council itself on the assumption that it would be able to access funding as each funder has its own eligibility criteria. However it should be noted that the example of St Mary's JFC shows that taking on the management of large sports fields would be expensive as well as both challenging and time consuming.

In light of this new information Council considered postponing a final decision about provision of new boundary fencing until the long term future of the fields was known. Councillor Kellett had asked the Leader of Bolton Council about the feasibility of the Town Council taking over Green Lane playing fields and Councillor McKeon informed Members that Malcolm Russell from the Department of Place was preparing a report which was expected to be available after local elections on 3 May, which would include recommendations and options for the future.

Members were very keen to take advantage of the opportunity to take over the playing fields for the benefit of and with the co-operation of sports groups in Horwich working in partnership with the Council through the Sports Advisory Group. It was suggested it would be useful to ask for advice and guidance from St Mary's JFC as they had experience of accessing funding and managing drainage of fields and building changing facilities.

Resolved that the Council write to Bolton Council to express its interest in taking over Green Lane fields and to invite Malcolm Russell to the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 14 May to present the report and update on the work being done on the playing fields, to allow Council to make a final, informed decision about taking over the fields, with the matter of a transfer of ownership to the Town Council to be considered in the future.

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

A local resident, Mrs Margaret Broadfoot expressed concerns about the current state of drainage on Green Lane playing fields which were waterlogged. There were also piles of sand and grit left at the side of the field which had been blown by recent high winds and which had blocked drains. The drain in the wall of Albert Mill was not working and this had resulted in the footpath flooding badly. It was pointed that the footpath was a useful short cut for many people including school children and the elderly but it was frequently unuseable.

Resolved to move back into Committee.

It was confirmed that these were Bolton Council matters and Councillor

McKeon agreed to pass these on to Bolton Council. Advice had been given that the field should not be used for a period of time to allow the grass to grow but pressure to play matches did not allow this. While it was acknowledged that there were issues with underground streams in the local area and flooding was a regular occurrence concern was expressed that the situation at Green Lane had gone on for too long. Resolved to ask Bolton Council for an update on current maintenance of the field as part of the report requested for 14 May.

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:

FG 6813 None.

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

FG 6814 None.

TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HORWICH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP HELD ON 6 MARCH 2018 AND 20 MARCH 2018:

FG 6815 Resolved to note the minutes of the meeting of the Horwich Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group held on 6 March 2018 and 20 March 2018. It was reported that progress ongoing with a public meeting arranged for 23 May to introduce the idea of a Neighbourhood Plan with a promotional event on a Day for St George on 21 April distributing leaflets from the Town Council gazebo in the town centre. Members were pleased to see this initiative gaining momentum.

TO RECEIVE THE NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE END OF WORLD WAR 1 COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 5 MARCH 2018:

FG 6816 Resolved to receive the notes of the meeting of the End of World War 1 Committee held on 5 March 2018. Members were informed that the Town Clerk was chasing Bolton Stone for a quotation for the repairs to the Loco Works War Memorial. Councillor Denton informed Members that the British Legion were in negotiations with Bluemantle about extending and improving the site of the War Memorial by relocating the railings further back onto the Loco Works site.

TO APPOINT THE TOWN MAYOR OF HORWICH FOR 2018 – 2019:

FG 6817 It was proposed by Councillor McKeon, seconded by Councillor Rock to appoint Councillor Kellett as Town Mayor for 2018 – 2019. This was followed by a proposal from Councillor Chadwick, seconded by Councillor Denton to appoint Councillor Wright as Town Mayor for 2018 – 2019.

It was resolved to appoint Councillor Wright as Town Mayor of Horwich for 2018 – 2019 by 6 votes to 5 with no abstentions recorded.

TO APPOINT THE DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR OF HORWICH FOR 2018 – 2019:

FG 6818 It was proposed by Councillor Kellett, seconded by Councillor Brady to appoint Councillor McKeon as Deputy Town Mayor for 2018 – 2019. This was then followed by a proposal from Councillor Chadwick, seconded by Councillor Denton to appoint Councillor Stone as Deputy Town Mayor for 2018 – 2019.

Resolved to appoint Councillor Stone as Deputy Town Mayor of Horwich for 2018 – 2019 by 7 votes to 4 with no abstentions recorded.

TO CONSIDER A REQUEST FROM HORWICH CARNIVAL COMMITTEE FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE OF £2,500 TOWARDS HORWICH CARNIVAL EVENTS ON 23/24 JUNE 2018:

FG 6819 Members were informed that the Carnival Committee have had difficulties with their external auditor and had requested a new auditor. While Members expressed concerns that fully audited detailed accounts had not been provided, they were keen that this important community event should continue to be supported as it was the last remaining Carnival in the borough.

Resolved to approve the request from Horwich Carnival Committee for financial assistance of £2,500 towards Horwich Carnival events on 23/24 June 2018 subject to receipt of externally audited accounts, to be seen by the Town Clerk and Councillor Kellett and Councillor Chadwick as Members of the Grants Sub Committee.

TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM COUNCILLOR CHADWICK AND CONSIDER THE USE OF “COMMUNITY BINS” IN HORWICH:

FG 6820 Councillor Chadwick informed members that community bins were already in use in other areas of the borough. The bins were attached to railings and provided by Bolton Council and managed by the community, which involves leaving filled bags alongside existing bins so they can be collected as part of the usual round, with volunteers responsible for providing new bags.

In response to a query as to if this could be managed by the Town Council's street cleaner would as part of his town centre round it was confirmed that this could be given a trial period. Some Members expressed concern about the possibility of vandalism and fire hazard, but it was agreed that it was important to do more to address the problem of litter as this would address the issue of a shortage of litter bins and benefit the community.

Resolved to approve a trial of 1- 2 bins community bins in locations to be

confirmed. Councillor Chadwick to provide contact details for the Community Volunteer Co-ordinator at Bolton Council.

ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT – SCHEDULE ATTACHED:

FG 6821 Resolved to approve the accounts for payment as presented and amounting to £7,989.90.

TOWN CLERKS REPORT – FOR INFORMATION ONLY:

- FG 6822
- a. Bolton Council: information from Two Towns Area Forum on survey consultation preventing social inclusion and challenging hateful radicalisation of all kinds in Greater Manchester.
 - b. Horwich Widows: feedback form for grant award of £200 in November 2017.
 - c. LALC: programme for Spring Conference 28 April 2018.
 - d. CPRE: information about the introduction of a nationwide deposit return system for bottles and cans.
 - e. LALC/NALC: Local Government Ethical Standards Consultation and Trading Standards Rogue Traders

Resolved to note the Town Clerk's Report as presented.

REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES:

FG 6823 Town Mayor

The Town Mayor reported that he had recently attended the Women's World Day of Prayer Service and Rivington Pike Fell Race which had both been successful events.

It was noted that concerns had been raised that the Garden of Remembrance was not an appropriate location for display of the Pike Race banner and it was confirmed that this information would be relayed to the race organisers. Thanks were also noted to Horwich Rotary and the Crown Hotel for their marvellous support for this event.

IN VIEW OF THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE BUSINESS ABOUT TO BE TRANSACTED IT IS ADVISABLE IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST THAT THE PRESS AND PUBLIC SHOULD BE TEMPORARILY EXCLUDED AND IF PRESENT ASKED TO WITHDRAW.