

## HORWICH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held remotely due to Covid-19 restrictions on Monday 8 March 2021 commencing at 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillors: M. Brady (in the Chair) I. Aldcroft, M. Baines, J. Bostocksmith, S. Burke, S. Chadwick, A. Coward, S. Denton, D. Grant, S. Rock, C. Rotheram, G. Stone.  
C. Hutchinson, Town Clerk.  
Mr David Barnes, Horwich RMI Harriers & AC  
Councillor K. McKeon, Ward Councillor Horwich North East  
Councillor R. Silvester, Ward Councillor Horwich North East

TO SUBMIT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND ACCEPT THE REASONS:

FG 7244 Resolved to accept apologies from Councillor Wright and an apology for lateness was accepted from Councillor Rock

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

FG 7245 Councillor Stone expressed a personal interest as a member of Horwich Harriers & AC. Councillor Burke expressed a personal interest as he had worked with one of the recipients of the Horwich Civic Award.

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

FG 7246 None.

TO RECEIVE A PRESENTATION FROM MR DAVID BARNES ON THE PROPOSED 'TRACK TO TRAIL' PROJECT AND TO CONSIDER AN EXPRESSION OF SUPPORT FOR HORWICH RMI HARRIERS & AC TO UNDERTAKE A FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR THIS PROJECT:

FG 7247 Resolved to move out of Committee.

Mr Barnes presented slides on the proposed 'Track to Trail Project', and outlined the aim of the project which was to create a greenspace for green exercise at Red Moss Tip in Horwich. Although there is a trail around and on top of the tip it is not well used, is overgrown and can feel intimidating. Currently conditions underfoot are poor although with improvements the track would be wide enough to accommodate cycling, walking and running. It has a good location close to Parkway railway station and at one point borders the SSSI. The Bolton Arena athletics track is located next to the tip and has become worn out with poor trackside facilities which require substantial upgrading. Horwich Harriers & AC is not in a position to bid for funding for improvements until it has some control of the track which it currently hires from Bolton Arena. The aim of the project would be to improve the tip trail experience, including improved access, with development subject to a feasibility study, in association with other potential partners such as the Woodland Trust, GMWDA, Lancashire Wildlife Trust, Network Rail/TfGM.

In the longer term, the creation of an Environment and Wellbeing Laboratory on

unused land at Futura Park was envisaged. This would provide a learning, activity and research centre for health and wellbeing and water managed, perhaps run by a university, with the potential to improve local habitat management by using volunteers and encouraging green exercise.

Mr Barnes was thanked for his presentation and Members were in agreement that the proposal was an excellent idea. It was hoped that this project could tie in with a project by Friends of Horwich Green Spaces, details of which were due to be announced shortly. Some concern was expressed regarding contamination and that relevant advice should be obtained before work began. It was requested that due consideration should be given to maintaining a buffer zone for protection of wildlife e.g. deer, in view of the future development of 400 new homes on the other side of the SSSI. There was a suggestion to involve local schools in light of the educational benefit of the project.

With regard to funding opportunities, it was advised that Bolton Council may be able to assist via liaison with Bolton CVS, along with other sources. In response to a query about whether Bolton Council could assist local sports clubs in a similar position to Horwich Harriers to access funding, it was confirmed that there was funding available for specific projects, Councillor Brady would look into this on their behalf. While it was acknowledged that the Town Council had some powers with regard to provision of services for recreational activities, this was subject to availability of funding.

Resolved to move back into Committee.

Resolved to approve an expression of support for Horwich Harriers & AC to undertake a feasibility study for the proposed 'Track to Trail Project'.

TO APPROVE THE AMENDED MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD REMOTELY ON 11 JANUARY 2021:

FG 7248 Resolved to approve the amended minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held remotely on 11 January 2021.

TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD REMOTELY ON 8 FEBRUARY 2021:

FG 7249 Resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held remotely on 8 February 2021.

TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MEETING OF THE CIVIC AWARDS AND SIGNS SUB COMMITTEE HELD REMOTELY ON 5 FEBRUARY 2021:

FG 7250 Resolved to approve the minutes and recommendations of the Civic Awards and Signs Sub Committee held remotely on 5 February 2021.

TO APPROVE THE STATEMENT OF QUARTERLY ACCOUNTS FOR THE PERIOD ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2020:

FG 7251 Resolved to approve the statement of quarterly accounts for the period ending 31 December 2020.

TO APPROVE THE QUARTERLY REPORT FROM INTERNAL AUDIT TO THE PERIOD ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2020:

FG 7252 Resolved to approve the quarterly report from internal audit to the period ending 31 December 2020.

TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE THE INSTALLATION OF A DOUBLE-SIDED SIGN ILLUSTRATING THE HISTORY OF THE FORMER 'TIN MISSION' SITE, MARY STREET EAST UP TO A MAXIMUM COST OF £300, AS PER THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE CIVIC AWARDS AND SIGNS SUB COMMITTEE:

FG 7253 Resolved to approve the installation of a double-sided sign illustrating the history of the former 'Tin Mission' site, Mary Street East, up to a maximum cost of £300, as per the recommendation of the Civic Awards and Signs Sub Committee. Councillors Burke and Rotheram were thanked for preparing a report on proposals for the new sign. It was noted for clarification that the cost of the signs was £108 + VAT.

TO CONSIDER A REQUEST FROM COUNCILLOR CHADWICK THAT THE COUNCIL MAKES AN OBJECTION UNDER s123 LGA 1972 TO THE DISPOSAL OF OPEN SPACE LAND ADJACENT TO 244 CHORLEY NEW ROAD, WHICH HAD BEEN SIGNED OFF BY BOLTON COUNCIL ON 29 DECEMBER 2020:

FG 7254 Councillor Chadwick informed Members that following the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 11 January 2021 he had contacted Councillor Cox at Bolton Council to establish whether Horwich Town Council could acquire this land. Following SAMP consultation with Ward Councillors, Councillor Cox had decided which parcels of land could be disposed of. The process would be managed by Robertson's who had advised Councillor Chadwick that the land had been valued at the market rate of approximately £10,000. There would be a two-week public consultation process which was due to be advertised imminently. If it was then decided that the disposal was to go ahead, this would be done by auction by the end of June. Councillor Chadwick advised Members that the first step to prevent the disposal of the land was for Horwich Town Council to object under section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972, on grounds of loss of green space and a community facility.

While Members expressed concern at the continuing loss of open space in Horwich, local residents had already indicated that they were not in favour of this land being kept. It was noted that Bolton Council were legally obliged to obtain the best possible price for disposal and that the Town Council had not made allocation in the budget for the purpose of buying land. It was also commented that although the land is used, there had been concerns about anti-social behaviour, saving one area may affect another one that is more popular and well used. It was acknowledged that it was inevitable that some of the sites were going to be sold.

However, it was agreed that making an objection to the disposal did not commit the Town Council to any further action until later after the consultation process had ended and the decision had been made.

Resolved to approve the request from Councillor Chadwick that the Council makes an objection under s123 LGA 1972 to the disposal of open space land adjacent to 244 Chorley New Road, under the process of public consultation, on grounds of loss of green space and community facility.

## TO APPROVE ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT – SCHEDULE ATTACHED:

FG 7255 Resolved to approve the accounts for payment amounting to £10,926.04.

Campaign to Protect Rural England (Annual membership renewal)	£36.00
Franking Sense (Quarterly copy charges for Xerox 7200i and Xerox C405 Oct – Dec 2020)	£119.64
Signcraft (2 x memorial signs for Garden of Remembrance)	£260.40
LBH Accountancy Services (Completion of internal audit review for period to 31 December 2020)	£510.00
Transfer to salaries and wages account	£10,000.00

## TOWN CLERKS REPORT (EMAILED TO MEMBERS) – FOR INFORMATION ONLY:

- FG 7256
- a. Bolton Council: Horwich Town Centre Steering Group minutes of meeting held on 26 January 2021.
  - b. NALC: policy consultation – Right to Regenerate.
  - c. NALC: The People’s Powerhouse online event ‘Leading Recovery, Getting Level. Time for a Reset?’ on 22 March 2021.
  - d. Summary of Town Councillors’ casework.

The Town Clerk’s report was noted.

## REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES – FOR INFORMATION ONLY:

- FG 7257
- a. Town Mayor – Councillor Stone reported that he had attended the Service of Commemoration for the 63<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the Winter Hill Air Disaster on 27 February, with short video available on youtube via the Town Council’s facebook page.
  - b. Horwich Ward Councillors – Councillor Brady reported that there a meeting about the future health centre was due to take place shortly; town centre regeneration objectives had been signed off by Bolton Council and she had also met with representatives from Blackrod with regard to their plans; Area Forums were looking at community safety works; the application from Armstrongs for an extension to quarrying operations at Montcliffe had been refused at Bolton Planning
  - c. Reports from Representatives on Outside Bodies as per the approved list. It was reported that there was some doubt about on the road events taking place in 2021 due to restrictions. Festival of Racing organisers had hoped to postpone this event until September or it may be put back to 2022 but

this had yet to be confirmed. In response to a query about the Carnival taking place in 2021, the Council's representatives on the Carnival Committee were asked to contact the organisers and report back to Council.

Reports from Representatives were noted.

TO APPROVE THE DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE AS 12 APRIL 2021:

FG 7258 Resolved to approve the date of the next meeting as 12 April 2021. The meeting closed at 8.23 pm.

Chair.....

Date.....