

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 16 August 2023 commencing at 7.15 pm

PRESENT: Councillors: D. Grant (in the Chair) I. Aldcroft, R. Bamforth, S. Chadwick, K. McKeon, V. Rigby, C. Rotheram, J. Walton, S. Williamson, P. Wright
C. Morris, Deputy Town Clerk.

Prior to the meeting being held, a one-minute silence was observed for John Cronnolley, a past Councillor. Councillor Cronnolley served on the council as a Lib Dem from 1999 – 2003 and was re-elected in 2003 and served until 2006. He was heavily involved with the refurbishment of the former derelict Rifle Range at the Community Centre into what is now the Horwich Heritage Centre.

CHAIR TO OUTLINE FIRE SAFETY EVACUATION PROCEDURE:

FG 7573 Councillor Grant outlined the procedure from the information provided.

TO ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

FG 7574 Apologies were accepted from Councillor Campbell and 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 7575 Councillor Chadwick and Councillor Grant declared an interest in the confidential item.

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 7576 None.

TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 12 JUNE 2023:

FG 7577 Resolved to approve the minutes and recommendations of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 12 June 2023.

Councillor Rotheram entered the meeting at this point.

TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM COUNCILLOR ROTHERAM AND CONSIDER APPROVAL OF COSTS FOR NEW CHRISTMAS LIGHTING DISPLAYS IN HORWICH TOWN CENTRE, INCLUDING INSTALLATION, DISMANTLING AND STORAGE OF DISPLAYS AND ELECTRICITY COSTS:

FG 7578 After extensively researching specialist companies, it was reduced down to 3 suppliers to submit a quote the Town Council. Out of the three companies, two quoted for replacement of Christmas decorations whilst one supplier offered an alternative of refurbishment. In addition to the costings, an inclusion of a focal point on the junctions of Winter Hey Lane and Lee Lane with additional lights on the Christmas Tree. The refurbishment option came under the allocated budget provision with an annual charge of £4,700 excluding VAT for the following years

which included installation, removal, testing, inspection, administration, traffic management plans and permits as opposed to renewing the lights which was at a cost of around £20k per annum. On balance, it was better to refurbish the existing Christmas lights.

The refurbished lights would be brighter and be switched on during the day. The current frames were in good condition and would be considered inefficient to have them renewed at a greater cost when they still have use in them as refurbishment of the lights sits within the budget. Current annual costs at Bolton Council is £6,600. The refurbishment element with a new supplier would be around £2k cheaper than the current annual costs however Councillor Rotheram felt he could possibly get a further reduction.

Councillor McKeon wanted to thank Councillor Rotheram for his report outlining proposals with the comparisons.

It was agreed that for the next financial year, provision for additional lights would be made for Chorley New Road and other areas such as Sparrow Park and the Public Hall.

The lights had been updated around 6 years ago by previous Ward Councillors and to renew these would be a waste. Permission at Bolton Council needs to be sought in which the company supplying the lights would liaise directly with the relevant department.

Councillor Grant addressed a query regarding Town Council's paying for Christmas lighting whilst other Towns that don't have a Council still have Christmas lighting. It was stated that the monies for the towns without a Town/parish Council have to pay from their Area Forum budget.

It was also agreed that Bolton Council has become more favourable to alternative contractors supplying services as long as compliance has been met.

Resolved to approve for Illumidex UK Ltd to supply new Christmas lighting displays in Horwich Town Centre, including installation, dismantling and storage of displays at a cost of £19,934 exc. VAT for the first year.

Action: Councillor Rotheram to contact Illumidex UK Ltd to arrange time scale, raising payment and to quote for additional lighting in optional areas.

TO RESOLVE THAT THE COUNCIL TEMPORARILY SUSPENDS FINANCIAL REGULATIONS AND THAT THE REASONS FOR THE SUSPENSION ARE RECORDED:
 FG 7579 Resolved to approve that the Council temporarily suspends Financial Regulations for the purpose of the Festival of Horwich due to time constraints of attaining three quotes for comparisons.

TO CONSIDER APPROVAL THAT THE TOWN CLERK ON BEHALF OF THE COUNCIL MAKES AN OBJECTION TO CHORLEY COUNCIL TO PLANNING APPLICATION 22/01238 DRYFIELD COTTAGE, DRYFIELD LANE, RIVINGTON – ERECTION OF 1NO DETACHED DWELLING, CREATION OF NEW VEHICULAR ACCESS AND ERECTION OF GATES

(FOLLOWING THE DEMOLITION OF EXISTING DWELLING AND AN OUTBUILDING), ON GROUNDS OF THE SITE'S LOCAL HERITAGE ASSOCIATION, ALONG WITH OVERDEVELOPMENT IN THE GREEN BELT:

FG 7580 Whilst the above location does not fall within the Horwich boundary, Dryfield Cottage is a significant historical building with links to the Pilkington family and William Pickup (former Mayor of Horwich and maker of clay building materials). The Pilkington family (Pilkington Glass) ancestors founded what is now Rivington and Blackrod High School. It was requested that the site is designated as a non-Designated Heritage asset.

Resolved to consider approval that the Town Clerk on behalf of the Council makes an objection to Chorley Council on planning application 22/01238 Dryfield Cottage, Dryfield Lane, Rivington – Erection of 1no detached dwelling, creation of new vehicular access and erection of gates.

Action: Town Clerk to raise an objection on behalf of Horwich Town Council to Chorley Council on planning application 22/01238

TO APPROVE ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT – SCHEDULE ATTACHED

FG 7581 Resolved to approve the accounts for payment amounting to £29,283.84

The Edge Systems (Photo ID card holders, lanyards for new Councillors, Authorised out of Committee)	£75.04
Sage (UK) Ltd (Accounts software package – July)	£86.40
HR Solutions (Monthly HR retainer – August, OH referral Cancellation fee)	£227.88
LGA 1972 s144 Signs of the Times (Civic plaque for former Grundy Hill site)	£537.00
Transfer to Town Mayor's Charity Account (Second payment of mayoral allowance)	£1000.00
Horwich Community Centre (VAT refund 01/01/23 – 31/03/23)	£3012.12
Turner Westwell Ltd (Professional Services/valuation report)	£3780.00
Transfer to Salaries and Wages Account (Authorised out of committee due to time constraints)	£10,000

Bolton Council
 (Charges for running 2023 Town Council
 elections as per attached letter) £10,565.40

It was agreed to query the other election costs included within the invoice from Bolton Council.

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

- FG 7582 a. Councils record of outstanding motions
 b. Chris Green MP: Information about funding for community defibrillators

The Town Clerk's report was noted.

REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES – FOR INFORMATION ONLY:

- FG 7583 a. Town Mayor of Horwich
- Councillor Grant, Town Mayor of Horwich attended the Horwich Heritage 'The 70's' opening exhibition. He said it was fantastic and a worthwhile event to attend.

b. Horwich Ward Councillors

Councillor Wright

- Ward Councillors had a recent meeting with the shop keepers to discuss what is happening in Horwich Town and felt it had gone positive.
- Demolition on the stores building on the Loco Works has started. At present, the back area and roof has been removed. Currently awaiting the outcome of the double floor.

Councillor Williamson

None

Councillor Rotheram

- Demolition of the stores building is underway which is the second to the last core heritage building. Has contact Mark Cardwell and Paul Whittington at Bolton Council to ask about retaining the fascia of the building including images of similar examples. The response stated it would incur 20% onto the build. Councillor Rotheram is hoping they stop demolition and retain the front and is awaiting an outcome.
- Awaiting feedback from Bolton Council on behalf of the residents at Fox Street regarding the bins. Councillor Rotheram will chase up a response.

Councillor Rigby

- Have helped Horwich Parish School attain funding for installing a chicken coop for the chickens.
- Met with residents and liaised with Bolton Council regarding double yellow lines on the corners of either end of Stocks Park – Church Street and Victoria Road.

- There had been a resident complaining about flooding on Gorton Fold stating that despite drainage not being great however resurfacing on Church Street had caused it to become progressively worse with doors becoming damaged and sand bags being used. Councillor Rigby has spoken to relevant officers who have agreed to visit the site within the next two weeks to possibly have the opening to Gorton Fold slightly raised which should reduce the flooding.
- Another flooding concern at Bond Close but currently awaiting a response on this matter.

Councillor Bamforth

- Invited to Chorley as part of the Armed Forces Champion to attend the MPCT (Military Preparation College of Training) which was lovely to see.
- Yellow lines to be placed on the curvature of the entrance for the RMI Club as some of the residents of Rockhaven Court have had trouble getting out.
- Austins Lane – Councillor Bamforth, Assistant Director of Highways and a member of the legal team along with the owner of the garage, their representatives and police have agreed a meeting to finalise an agreement.
- A number of queries have been received regarding drainage on Pickups field. The main drainage has not yet been plumbed in and has a timeline of around 5 weeks as currently awaiting fitting of the aqua break and the sub tank.
- There have been trees cut down due to roots damaging the drainage system however, Councillor Bamforth is awaiting a response.
- PACT meeting –there were 27 members of the public in attendance at a meeting held 3 months ago which was the highest attendance in the borough. At the latest meeting there were 41 residents which is the highest attendance in Greater Manchester. This shows that the local people and the police are engaging with each other.

Councillor Grant

- Double yellow lines – There has been a scheme running for the past 2 and a half years in which last week a list of the schemes with an amount missing including costings was produced by Bolton Council. This has been referred back to highways along with additional schemes to be included on the list for works to be carried out.
- A bus stop box will be being painted outside St Marys School.
- The Ward Councillors for Horwich South and Blackrod went around Blackrod and Horwich with the Community Alliance Officers highlighting the community facilities that Blackrod had but with only Hilton Community Centre in Horwich South. The growth that the ward would be getting requires additional facilities. A potential site on the Loco Works has been recognised for sporting opportunities as the land is not able to be developed on for housing. There was a commitment previously made by Bolton Council to find a permanent home for Lostock Union Rugby Club who has recently been made homeless. The land is a possible solution to have a multi-use facility on that site. However, this wouldn't be for a number of years.

c. Representatives on Outside Bodies

None

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 SHOULD BE ASKED TO LEAVE.