

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 13 November 2023 commencing at 7.15 pm

PRESENT: Councillors: D. Grant (in the Chair) I. Aldcroft, R. Bamforth, S. Burke, K. McKeon, V. Rigby, S. Rock, C. Rotheram, J. Scoble, J. Walton, P. Wright
C. Morris, Deputy Town Clerk
2 members of public

CHAIR TO OUTLINE FIRE SAFETY EVACUATION PROCEDURE:

FG 7617 Councillor Grant outlined the procedure from the information provided.

TO ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

FG 7618 Apologies were accepted from Councillors Campbell and Chadwick.

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

FG 7619 None.

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 7620 Resolved to move out of committee to allow a member of public to speak.

A member of public informed Members that following attendance at Council over eight years ago to raise concerns regarding the terrible state of Pickups Field, it is now much worse and asked members whether this could be an agenda item for discussion. Following the construction of new houses at the top end of the field, it seems that the work that Bolton Council has carried out to the pitches is a problem. One pitch has never been used and continues to deteriorate and which will lead to it becoming unusable. If unused the land could potentially be purchased for development. A number of questions were raised:

- What was happening with the football pitch?
- What is happening with the £100k that was allocated from the sale to improve the field?
- What is happening with the gully since money was budgeted for the works to be carried out as have heard it is now not going ahead?

It was claimed that there are no drawings for any of the work that has been carried out and that all the water has been diverted from the football pitch to the surrounding playing field. It has been over six months since the work was done and Bolton Council should rectify the works that have been carried out. A further query was raised as to what the money from the sale and development of the college field was being spent on.

Councillor Grant stated that no decisions were being made and would give an update on what was known at the current time. It was confirmed that there is an agreement in principle for Pickups Field to be transferred to the Old Riv's football team. However, the problem has been is that Green Lane playing field is Charitable Land which requires it to go through the Charitable Land Panel which is a convoluted matter. The delay on transferring it has been due to doing it all in one go and it had now been requested that the land is split so that the field could start to be invested in whilst the other land is going through the panel. This land would be leased from Bolton Council as opposed to a transfer of ownership.

In relation to the £100k allocated, the money is still there and around £134k has been receipted from the former college site. A full audit of Section 106 monies will be carried out as there are various small amounts that Bolton Council appear to be using as maintenance money rather than being used for re-investment and better utilised.

In relation to the area forum funds that had been earmarked for the gully, officers met with Ward Councillors on a number of occasions and it has become apparent that there has been significant damage to the drainage due to the build which has caused a huge excess of water. There was a suggestion to raise the path slightly however with the sheer amount of water, officers concluded that this would erode the path quite quickly as it would be unable to facilitate the amount of water. They are now liaising with Bolton at Home with regard to paying for the drainage since they caused the damage. An assurance been given that there had been no negative impact on the fields however this has not been the case.

Another member of public spoke with regard to the path at the back of Green Lane playing field about associated drainage of the path due to be carried out and completed in a few weeks' time by Bolton at Home. Unsure whether anyone has been in negotiations with them in regards to that section of the path. The drainage at the bottom end which had been done earlier in the year where the culverts had broken and had been replaced, was now running slow again and crashing down the stream but not reaching Albert Street and would need to be looked at.

Area forum funding in previous years was to have been allocated for hand railing at the top of Sandringham due to it being steep and H bars on the ground for parking, one on Melbourne Grove where the bin wagon is unable to gain access due to people parking and the other at the bottom of Bateman Street where residents are unable to get out because of people parking and blocking access. These had been agreed by the area forum funding but had not been actioned. A resident also asked what was happening with the Town Centre Regeneration Steering Group since some officers involved with the group had now left Bolton Council and there doesn't appear to be any movement on it.

Councillor Bamforth stated that he had not been informed regarding any of the works that had been agreed to be carried out prior to their election and would look into it.

Councillor Grant stated that most of the officers on the Town Centre Regeneration Steering Group had left, and that a meeting had been held last

month with Paul Whittingham and some of the designs are being reviewed. There will be another meeting with officers on the 11th December and this group may come to Horwich Council which will work in conjunction with Bolton Council. The £800k additional monies have been secured through PSP dividend that was taken for the car park and children's play park so the amount is back up to around £4 million minus Hampson Street. If this group comes in house, it will go back out to consultation with some other ideas in addition to road works.

In regards to the lighting on Hampson Street, the posts were being placed into concrete as Electricity Northwest would not allow cables to go underground, so awaiting further instructions for cables to be placed above.

Resolved to move back into committee.

Action: To include an agenda item on the update of Pickups field, on the next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes meeting

TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 9 OCTOBER 2023:

FG 7621 Resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 9 October 2023.

TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GRANTS TO VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS SUB COMMITTEE HELD ON 24 OCTOBER 2023:

FG 7622 Resolved to approve the minutes and recommendations of the Grants to Voluntary Organisations Sub Committee held on 24 October 2023.

TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE DEPUTY TOWN CLERK TO CONSIDER CONTINUATION OF ADDITIONAL WINTER GRITTING IN HORWICH (PART BROWNLOW ROAD AND NEW CHAPEL ROAD) BY BOLTON COUNCIL FOR A THREE-MONTH PERIOD AT A COST OF £12,000:

FG 7623 Members at the previous meeting had queried the cost and wanted to ensure that the Council were getting value for money since Horwich Town Council are charged a fixed rate irrespective of whether the roads are gritted or not over the period. The Deputy Town Clerk had contacted seven local and national firms, with two contractors responding, with one not interested in reviewing the request and another quoting a cost of nearly £23k for the winter period. It was noted that since 2016, Horwich Town Council has been charged £12,000 annually by Bolton Council and this has not been impacted by inflation.

Resolved to receive a report from the Deputy Town Clerk to consider and approve continuation of additional winter gritting in Horwich (Part Brownlow Road and New Chapel Lane) by Bolton Council for a three-month period at a cost of £12,000.

TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE DEPUTY TOWN CLERK TO APPROVE IN PRINCIPLE THE TAKE OVER AND MANAGEMENT OF ALLOTMENTS FROM BOLTON COUNCIL:

FG 7624 Councillor Grant had been liaising at Bolton Council regarding the transfer of management of the allotments in Horwich. Bolton Council previously had an Allotments Officer who would oversee tenancies and any breaches however this position was cut in 2014 and has led to allotments becoming uncultivated,

tenancies changed without official notice, allotment holders creating private gardens and garages being built without permission. Bolton Council have agreed transfer and would like to use Horwich Town Council as a pilot scheme to transfer other allotments in other areas of the borough to interested organisations. The request is to take over the management of Crown Lane, Leverpark, Nasymth, Longworth Road and Green Lane allotments. A cost comparison had been carried out which shows there is scope to increase the cost of the annual rents.

The administration management would be carried out by Horwich Town Council staff and Council to consider employing a Lengthsman to oversee the day-to-day management of the sites with the provision of additional duties.

It was noted that Horwich Town Council should consider the set-up of an Allotments Sub-Committee to make decisions such as policies, set annual rent, waiting list management, welfare and insurance matters.

Resolved to receive the report from the Deputy Town Clerk and to approve in principle the take over and management of allotments from Bolton Council.

TO APPROVE THE STATEMENT OF QUARTERLY ACCOUNT FOR THE PERIOD TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2023

FG 7625 Resolved to approve the statement of quarterly accounts for the period to 30 September 2023.

TO RECEIVE THE QUARTERLY REPORT FROM INTERNAL AUDIT TO THE PERIOD ENDING 30 SEPTEMBER 2023:

FG 7626: Resolved to receive the quarterly report from internal audit to the period ending 30 September 2023.

TO RECEIVE A FINANCIAL REPORT FROM THE TOWN CLERK ON THE FESTIVAL OF HORWICH EVENT:

FG 7627: Resolved to receive a financial report from the Town Clerk on the Festival of Horwich Event.

TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE EVENTS STEERING GROUP ON THE FESTIVAL OF HORWICH:

FG 7628: Resolved to defer receiving a report from the Events Steering Group on the Festival of Horwich until the group has met and compiled a report for Council.

TO APPROVE ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT – SCHEDULE ATTACHED

FG 7629 Resolved to approve the accounts for payment amounting to £15,823.38

C. Hutchinson (Petty cash)	£50.00
LALC (New Councillors & Clerks training 26/09/23)	£105.00

Craftprint (1,000 sticky labels/town crest)	£112.80
(500 eco pens/HTC)	£372.00
Leach Briely Accountants (Completion of internal audit to 30.09.23)	£600.00
<u>LGA 1972 s137 – Grants to Voluntary Groups</u>	
Horwich Community Choir	£500.00
Horwich Parish Church	£300.48
Wright Place Luncheon Club	£150.00
Horwich Amateur Theatre Society	£500.00
Horwich Loco Basketball Club	£500.00
Old Rivingtonians (u16s) Girls Football Club	£500.00
Horwich Youth Darts	£250.00
<u>LGA 1972 s137 – Festival of Horwich</u>	
Reimbursement to Cllr C Rotheram (Fuel for hired van and generator)	£65.55
Reimbursement to Cllr V Rigby (45 x hi-vis vests)	£84.00
(Trophies and winners medals)	£207.00
Titanium Security (Security provision)	£406.00
Horwich Community Centre (VAT refund to 30.06.23)	£1,120.55
Transfer to Salaries & Wages account	£10,000.00
Transfer from Instant Access to Current account	£25,000.00

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

- FG 7630
- a. Horwich Town Council Monitoring and Feedback Form for Grants to Voluntary Groups and Organisations – St Catherines PCC
 - b. An invitation to all Councillors for the Horwich Town Council Civic Lighting of the Tree – 1 December 2023 at the Crown Roundabout at 6pm

The Town Clerk's report was noted.

REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES – FOR INFORMATION ONLY:

- FG 7631
- a. Town Mayor of Horwich
Councillor Grant, Town Mayor of Horwich attended the North West Air Ambulance base open day at their Barton base to celebrate Air Ambulance week. The Mayor then a Macmillan coffee morning at St Catherines nursing home and went on to launch the new menu at the Bridge Inn.

Chris Green MP invited the Mayor and Mayoress to attend the Houses of Parliament and finally involvement by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor at Remembrance events in Horwich, Bolton, Blackrod and Adlington. Horwich and Blackrod.

b. Horwich Ward Councillors

Councillor Wright: None

Councillor Rotheram: Remembrance Garden, the memorial had been repointed using the correct material, the weeds had been removed and work starting to address the slope. Members and Officers will meet to discuss which shrubs will be removed and which ones will remain and reinstallation of stone work.

Councillor Rigby: reports of lights at Station Park not working.

Councillor Bamforth: has had meetings at sheltered accommodation and dealing with matters there. He would be attending a PACT meeting next week which clashes with Horwich's Planning Committee meeting

The armed forces side has been extremely busy with numerous meetings with the Mayor's Office at Bolton and the Cadets. The 1471 Horwich Air Cadets will now be included in emails from the office and be involved with events.

Attended the Armed Forces Concert which was enjoyable and currently tallying up the funds to find out how much each cadet force will receive.

Meetings have been organised between Veterans into Logistics with Bolton Council as the organisation will be branching into engineering.

Remembrance Parades were all a success.

Had a meeting with one of the officers to discuss Green Lane fields as have expressed displeasure regarding responsibility of payment of works. Bolton Council and Bolton at Home will now be discussing liability of works.

Will be heading to Manchester to attend the Armed Forces Covenant Silver Awards where the Council is officially recognised by the Armed Forces Covenant for its work.

All Ward Councillors will be invited to GMP surgeries as some of their enquiries are aimed at the Ward Councillors.

Councillor Grant: had been informed about rat issues from Pickups Field at Castle Crescent with one resident having serious issues with Bolton at Home and rat issues.

Issues with traffic lights at Station Road. They are breaking through the link road at the moment.

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.