

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 September 2019 commencing at 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillors: M. Brady (in the Chair), I. Aldcroft, J. Bostocksmith, S. Burke, S. Chadwick, A. Coward, K. Denton, D. Grant, C. Rotheram, S. Rock, G. Stone, P. Wright.
C. Hutchinson, Town Clerk.
2 members of the public.

CHAIR TO OUTLINE FIRE SAFETY EVACUATION PROCEDURE:

FG 7044 Councillor Brady outlined the procedure from the information provided.

TO SUBMIT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND ACCEPT THE REASONS:

FG 7045 Resolved to accept apologies from Councillors Baines and S. Denton.

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

FG 7046 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 7047 Resolved to move out of Committee to allow members of the public to speak.

Mr Stuart Whittle, Chair of Horwich Heritage presented the Town Council with a copy of a new book 'Horwich in World War II (1939 – 1945). Mr Whittle then spoke about the decision taken by Bolton Council Planning Committee to approve the location of the former Loco Works site new link road resulting in the demolition of the Erecting Shop. It was a disappointing outcome considering the amount of time spent by Horwich Heritage and Bolton Civic Trust trying save the building. Mr Whittle also expressed concern at the way that the application had been handled and the lack of support shown by local residents. Mr Whittle suggested, prior to demolition, organising an event to commemorate the history of this iconic building with the involvement of local groups with a connection to the Loco Works. He suggested that could take place at the RMI Club followed by a march carrying a banner down to the Erecting Shop. Mr Whittle informed members that Horwich Heritage would be prepared to work with the Town Council to organise this event and requested that the Town Council should contact the developer to inform them of the proposal and request the timescale for demolition.

On return to Committee Mr Whittle was thanked for the donation of the new book and members also passed on their gratitude to Horwich Heritage for their hard work attempting to prevent the demolition. There was strong support for Mr Whittle's proposal, members were disappointed to see the loss of an important industrial heritage site in a town that was built on the railway industry. It was suggested that newer residents of Horwich were unaware of the town's

rich industrial heritage which could explain the lack of support for the retention of the Erecting Shop. Noted to include an agenda item at next month's meeting to discuss this proposal in more detail and in the meantime the Town Council, with Mr Whittle's assistance, to write to the developer to request a timescale regarding planned demolition and to inform of the intention of holding a commemoration event.

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

Ms. Suzanne Carruthers, representing Horwich Eco Friendly Community Group informed members of plans to invite the local community to celebrate the 50th birthday of Earth Day on 22 April 2020 by raising awareness and promoting various eco-friendly themed activities in local schools.

On return to Committee, Ms Carruthers was informed that many of her group's objectives were shared by the Council which had its own Environmental Group and was in the process of setting up a Youth Council. Also some members were involved in regular litter picking events. Ms Carruthers was invited to attend the next meeting of the Environmental Improvements Advisory Group, Town Clerk to provide details. Ms Carruthers was thanked for her attendance.

TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 12 AUGUST 2019:

FG 7048 Resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 12 August 2019.

TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MEETING OF THE CIVIC AWARDS AND SIGNS SUB COMMITTEE HELD ON 12 AUGUST 2019:

FG 7049 Resolved to approve the minutes and recommendations of the meeting of the Civic Awards and Civic Signs Sub Committee held on 12 August 2019.

TO A REPRESENTATIVE TO SERVE ON THE RIVINGTON AND BRINSCALL LOCAL ADVISORY GROUP FOR 2019 – 2020:

FG 7050 Resolved to appoint Councillor Rotheram to serve on the Rivington and Brinscall Local Advisory Group for 2019 – 2020.

TO APPROVE A CHANGE OF DATE FOR THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE FROM 13 APRIL 2020 (EASTER MONDAY) TO 6 APRIL 2020:

FG 7051 Resolved to approve a change of date for the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee from 13 April 2020 (Easter Monday).to 6 April 2020.

TO CONSIDER A PROPOSAL TO MOVE TOWARDS THE DIGITISATION OF THE COUNCIL AND AGREE ACTION IN RESPONSE TO THE PROPOSAL:

FG 7052 A report had been circulated to all members for information. It was noted that this item had been requested by several councillors. Legislation now allows councils to send agendas electronically, ending a budgetary burden and enabling them to benefit from the use of modern digital communications in the most efficient way possible. These reduced costs provide better value for

money for local taxpayers as well as the obvious environmental benefits. However should a councillor still require a hard copy then they are legally entitled to one and provision would be made for this.

Although there were some concerns expressed about the practicalities of members using their own devices at meetings and some members expressed a preference for the continued provision of paper information at Planning Committee meetings, there was broad agreement with the proposal, particularly with reference to a previous item about supporting eco-friendly initiatives.

It was resolved to approve the proposal to move towards the digitisation of the Council, the Clerk to contact all members to establish individual preferences for either 'opting in' or 'opting out' prior to starting this initiative, to be reviewed in six months time.

TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION PLAN:

FG 7053 Members were informed that the proposed meeting on the 12 September had been postponed until October as the tender for the services of consultants had not yet been awarded. In response to concern expressed at the use of consultants in the process it was explained that this was based on economies of scale as all four town centres were included in the brief. Assurance was given that the process was resident-led. Residents and local businesses would have the chance to comment on the consultants' proposals and that the regeneration process would future proof the town centre for the next 20 – 30 years. The cost of using consultants was £50,000, split between the four town centres at a cost of £12,500 per town with a potential investment of £4 million for Horwich. In response to a query it was confirmed that the Neighbourhood Plan proposals would be included in the plan and that the revised map of the town centre did include the site of the former Leisure Centre.

Resolved to note the update on the Town Centre Regeneration Plan.

TO APPROVE ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT – SCHEDULE ATTACHED:

FG 7054 Resolved to approve the accounts for payment amounting to £2,040.00 as follows:

Petty Cash	£40.00
Horwich Town Council Business Reserve Account (Transfer of funds)	£2,000.00

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

FG 7055

- a. Parish and Town Training Workshops at LALC, Penwortham: Chairmanship Thursday 10 October 2019 7pm – 9pm; Finance Thursday 14 November 2019 7pm – 9pm.
- b LALC: Policy Consultation – Independent Review into local government audit.
- c Press Release: Cheque presentation to Bolton Mountain Rescue team by Horwich festival of Racing.
- d. NALC/LALC: online survey of councillors following May elections.

- e. Horwich Heritage: invitation to all councillors to new exhibition/open day on Saturday 7 September 2019 '80 Years Since the Start of World War II'
- f. LALC: 75th Annual General Meeting on Saturday 23 November 2019 at Howick House, Penwortham – programme, resolutions, attendance form.
- g. Brazley Residents Association: feedback/monitoring form for grant award of £400
- h. Email from Stuart Whittle: details of proposed event prior to demolition of Erecting Shop on former Loco Works site.
- i. Summary of Councillors' casework.

The Town Clerk's report was noted.

REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES – FOR INFORMATION ONLY:

FG 7056

Town Mayor's Report

The Town Mayor reported that mayoral duties over the past few weeks had included Horwich Beer Festival, Cedar Avenue Sports Day, Blackrod Mayor's 60s Night charity event, the new Heritage exhibition and the dedication of Bob and Barbara Ronson's memorial benches followed by a Volunteers Afternoon Tea at Horwich Community Centre.

Horwich Ward Councillors

Horwich and Blackrod/Councillor Wright: decision by Bolton Planning Committee to approve the location of the new link road resulting in the full demolition of the Erecting Shop; next meeting of Two Towns Forum arranged for Tuesday 8 October at 6.30pm in the Brunel Suite, Horwich RMI Club.

Horwich North East/Councillor Brady: resurfacing of roads had started and Highways have been requested to forward a schedule; some issues reported regarding school places and has requested an update; transformation/Bolton Council, unions have been consulted; update about back of railway terraces. Members were also informed that a response had been received from Bolton Council acknowledging the nomination of Pickups Field as an Asset of Community Value.

Representatives on outside Bodies (as per the approved list).

None.

The reports were noted.

TO APPROVE THE DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE AS 14 OCTOBER 2019:

FG 7043 Resolved to approve the date of the next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee as 14 October 2019.
The meeting closed at 8.27pm.

Chair..... Date.....