

## HORWICH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held remotely on Monday 12 October 2020 commencing at 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillors: M. Brady (in the Chair) I. Aldcroft, M. Baines, S. Burke, S. Chadwick, A. Coward, D. Grant, S. Rock, C. Rotheram, G. Stone, P. Wright.  
C. Hutchinson, Town Clerk.  
David Batten, CEO Hoot Credit Union Bolton  
Councillor K. McKeon, Ward Councillor Horwich North East  
Councillor R. Silvester, Ward Councillor Horwich North East  
1 member of the public.

TO SUBMIT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND ACCEPT THE REASONS:

FG 7170 Resolved to accept apologies from Councillor Bostocksmith, Councillor K. Denton and Councillor S. Denton. An apology for lateness was accepted from Councillor Chadwick.

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

FG 7171 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 7172 Resolved to move out of Committee to allow a member of the public to speak.

Councillor McKeon expressed his support for the Council's interest in credit unions such as Bolton Hoot which provided a way to help people who find it difficult to access mainstream financial services and also highlighted the support provided by Bolton at Home.

Resolved to move back into Committee.

TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 14 SEPTEMBER 2020:

FG 7173 Resolved to approve the minutes and recommendations of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 14 September 2020.

Due to technical difficulties it was resolved to change the order of business and move to agenda item 6.

Councillor Chadwick joined the meeting.

TO APPROVE THE SETTING UP AND APPOINTMENT OF 5 MEMBERS AND INTERESTED MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO SERVE ON THE FRIENDS OF HORWICH GREEN SPACES ADVISORY GROUP:

FG 7174 It was noted that this was a recommendation that had been made by the Environmental Advisory Group some time ago. It was noted that as constituted, Council-led, the group would be able to access various sources of grant funding

available.

Resolved to appoint Councillors Aldcroft, Baines, Burke, Grant and Rock to the Friends of Horwich Green Spaces Advisory Group.

**TO CONSIDER A PROPOSAL TO MAKE PROVISION FOR A CREDIT UNION FACILITY IN HORWICH:**

FG 7175 Resolved to move out of Committee to allow a member of the public to speak.

David Batten, CEO of Hoot Credit Union was welcomed to the meeting and gave a presentation and following this answered several questions from members.

Hoot CU has been established in Bolton for 30 years and provides flexible financial services such as personal loans and savings for those who have difficulty accessing mainstream providers. Hoot is a member of Credit Unions for Greater Manchester and is regulated by the Prudential Regulation Authority. It has over 6,000 members and has had premises in Bolton town centre for the past 5 years.

Hoot provides an alternative to mainstream credit, offering affordable loans with borrowers saving around £200 in interest on a typical small loan of £300. 72% of loans are spent in the Bolton and Bury area and Hoot lending provides a boost of at least £2 million to the local economy every year.

Hoot also provides savings accounts with eligibility for an annual dividend, subject to credit union performance. This encourages members to gain valuable savings skills for the first time and improves their credit scores, allowing future access other services. It was estimated that 4 out of 5 Hoot members start to save for the first time. Hoot also works with partner employers such as Bolton Council and Bolton at Home, offering a payroll savings scheme.

Funds are protected by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) up to a maximum of £85,000 per individual account holder just the same as high street banks and building societies.

During the pandemic Hoot has provided financial wellbeing advice and is moving towards an increased online presence with no plans in the foreseeable future to open any more in-person premises.

On return to Committee, Council thanked David for an interesting and informative presentation which had been a useful introduction to credit unions. It was agreed to keep in touch and schedule a future agenda item to discuss how the Council could assist with future promotion of credit union facilities in Horwich.

**TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS FOR REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY DUE TO COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS:**

FG 7176 All members had received a report containing recommendations made at a meeting between representatives from Horwich Town Council, Horwich Royal British Legion and the ATC on 8 October 2020, held in response to national and local Covid-19 guidance for outdoor events. It was noted that since 2019, responsibility for Remembrance Parades now fell within the remit of local

authorities. Horwich's Parade regularly attracts an attendance in excess of 2,000 and in light of current guidance on social distancing it was recommended that, as these numbers would make it impossible to safely steward the Parade and maintain social distancing, that this year's Parade should be cancelled.

Also, as both Remembrance Services at the Loco Works War Memorial and the Cenotaph are equally well attended, again it was recommended that both Services should also be cancelled, along with the regular gathering outside the Public Hall on Armistice Day, 11 November.

The Royal British Legion had put forward arrangements for a single representative from each local group or organisation to lay poppy wreaths at allocated times on Remembrance Sunday between 12pm – 4.30pm, to be managed by the Royal British Legion, whose representatives would be on hand to assist and advise and with the Gardens of Remembrance cordoned off and closed to the public during these times. Those attending will be required to wear facemasks and observe social distancing guidance. Wreaths can also be laid outside these times on Remembrance Sunday or on another day.

Resolved to cancel the Remembrance Sunday Parade and Services on 8 November 2020 and at the Public Hall on 11 November 2020, in light of current advice from national and local government on Covid-19 social distancing requirements. Horwich Town Council and the Royal British Legion to prepare and issue a joint statement at the earliest opportunity.

The Royal British Legion has also proposed the illumination of two sides of Rivington Pike with a red poppy symbol on the evenings of 8 and 11 November 2020 in a sign of Remembrance and has requested the approval of the Town Council to fund half the cost of £800 plus VAT for this purpose. Chorley Council has also indicated its willingness to participate once costs have been submitted. In the event that Chorley decline to contribute, Horwich Town Council are being asked to fund the whole cost. The cost also includes supply of two searchlights that will criss-cross the sky on both evenings. It was noticed that substantial savings would be made in other areas due to the cancellation of the Remembrance Parade and Services, thereby leaving adequate provision in the budget for this purpose.

Resolved to approve the cost for illumination of two sides of Rivington Pike with a red poppy symbol on the evenings of 8 and 11 November 2020 up to a maximum of £800 plus VAT.

**TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE LIGHTING OF THE CIVIC CHRISTMAS TREE DUE TO COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS AND APPROVE COSTS FOR THE TOWN CENTRE CHRISTMAS LIGHTING SCHEME**

FG 7177 As with Remembrance events, this is a civic event and due to current restrictions and in order to minimise the risk to public safety it is recommended that this year's Lighting of the Civic Christmas Tree Service due to take place at the Crown roundabout on Friday 4 December 2020 is cancelled.

Resolved to cancel the Lighting of the Civic Christmas Tree event on 4 December 2020 due to Covid-19 restrictions and resolved to approve the cost

for the installation and dismantling of the town centre Christmas lighting scheme at £6,500 plus VAT.

TO APPROVE THE COSTS FOR ADDITIONAL WINTER ROAD GRITTING IN HORWICH FROM 1 DECEMBER 2020 TO 28 FEBRUARY 2021:

FG 7178 Highways had confirmed that they would maintain the costs for the core 12 week period at the same cost as previous seasons at £1,000/per week for additional gritting of New Chapel Lane and top of Brownlow Road. In response to a query it was confirmed that Bolton Council's review of winter gritting policy was not yet completed.

Resolved to approve the cost for additional winter gritting in Horwich of New Chapel Lane and top of Brownlow Road from 1 December 2020 to 28 February 2021 at a cost of £1,000/per week plus VAT.

TO APPROVE THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MEETING OF THE SPORTS ADVISORY GROUP HELD REMOTELY ON 12 OCTOBER 2020:

FG 7179 The Sports Advisory Group had met and recommended a request for Council to approve a maximum budget of £5,000 for the purpose of a survey of Pickups/Green Lane playing fields as part of a Masterplan to develop the site for year-round multi-purpose sports use by the local community and to work with Bolton Council to put a long-term lease agreement in place to safeguard this important large green space for future generations and prevent further development.

Resolved to approve the recommendations of the meeting of the Sports Advisory Group held on 12 October 2020 including the allocation of a maximum budget of £5,000 for the purpose of a survey of Green Lane/Pickups playing fields.

TO APPROVE ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT – SCHEDULE ATTACHED:

FG 7180 Resolved to approve the accounts for payment amounting to £ 1,644.00.

Nationwide Capital Finance (Quarterly rental Xerox 7200i copier)	£450.00
---	---------

Leach Briely Accountants (Internal audit review to 31/3/20)	£474.00
--	---------

Leach Briely Accountants (Completion of year end audit for year ended 31/3/20 for combined accounts of Horwich Town Council and Horwich Community Centre)	£720.00
--	---------

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

- FG 7181
- a. Bolton Council Consultation: Review/Renewal of Dog Control Public Spaces Protection Order.
  - b. Bolton Council: Minutes of Horwich Town Centre Steering Group meeting held on 8 September 2020 and Horwich Town Centre Masterplan Consultation Headlines.
  - c. Horwich and Blackrod Neighbourhood Policing Team: newsletter issue 2.

- d. Churches Together in Horwich: 'Under the Pike' newsletter October 2020.
- e. LALC: invitation to 76<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting on 14 November 2020 at 10.00am via Zoom.
- f. Summary of Councillors' casework.

The Town Clerk's report was noted.

REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES – FOR INFORMATION ONLY:

- FG 7182
- a. Town Mayor – informed members of recent socially distanced cheque presentations to Bolton Mountain Rescue and Guide Dogs for the Blind. Due to cancellation of Lighting of the Civic Tree was looking at alternative remote/online arrangements with the Community Choir.
  - b. Horwich Ward Councillors – Councillor Wright reported that he had received copy of a proposed gating order for Brooklands/Old Station Park and would email to the Town Clerk for forwarding to all members. Also reported a request from a resident for traffic calming measures on Scholes Bank. Councillor Brady had received an update on highway improvements with the possibility of some additional funding becoming available.
  - c. Reports from Representatives on Outside Bodies as per the approved list. None.

Reports from Representatives were noted.

TO APPROVE THE DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE AS 9 NOVEMBER 2020:

FG 7183 Resolved to approve the date of the next meeting as 9 November 2020.  
The meeting closed at 8.58pm.

Chair.....

Date.....