

HORWICH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held remotely due to Covid-19 restrictions on Monday 8 February 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, P. Wright.
C. Hutchinson, Town Clerk.
Stuart Leigh, Horwich RMI Cricket Club
Malcolm Harrison, Stocks Residents Association
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 7234 None.

TO REMIND MEMBERS TO MAKE A DECLARATION CONCERNING ANY MATTERS TO BE DISCUSSED DURING THE MEETING OF WHICH THEY HAVE AN INTEREST:
FG 7235 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 7236 Resolved to move out of Committee to allow a member of the public to speak.

Councillor Silvester expressed his support for Stocks Residents' Association's opposition to the proposed development of Horwich Golf Course. He informed the meeting about their financial shortfall in funding for legal costs and asked that Horwich Town Council give consideration to financial assistance for this purpose from one of the current financial year's underspent budget headings such as elections.

Mr Malcolm Harrison, representing Stocks Park Residents Association informed the meeting that the group had set up an online fundraising page which had already raised approximately £2,000, leaving a shortfall of £4,000 to pay legal costs. It was stated that any support that the Council could provide would be greatly appreciated and that a fundraising raffle had also been launched. Mr Harrison also provided details about the current planning appeal, including an update on sending objections to the Planning Inspectorate.

Resolved to move back into Committee.

Councillor Silvester and Mr Harrison were thanked for attending the meeting. Concern was expressed that a Ward Councillor had requested that the Town Council consider allocation of monies from a specific budget heading for a completely different purpose and it was confirmed that audit requirements did not permit this. The correct process would be for Stocks Residents' Association to apply for grant funding for this purpose and, in response to a query the Town Clerk informed Members that advice would be sought from LALC as to whether grant funding could be awarded to a group or organisation for the purpose

of meeting its legal costs. Although Council had been and would continue to be fully supportive of SRA's opposition to the proposed Golf Course development, there was some concern expressed that providing financial assistance towards legal costs for a planning appeal may set a precedent for requests for grant funding for this purpose.

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

FG 7237 In response to comments from Councillor Chadwick it was resolved that approval of the minutes and recommendations of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 11 January 2021 be deferred, to include amendments requested by Councillor Chadwick, to the next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 8 March 2021.

TO RECEIVE A PRESENTATION FROM MR STUART LEIGH OF HORWICH RMI CRICKET CLUB ON WORKING WITH HORWICH TOWN COUNCIL TO IMPROVE CRICKET FACILITIES IN HORWICH:

FG 7238 Resolved to move out of Committee.

A letter from Mr Leigh on behalf of the Cricket Club had been circulated to all Members Mr Leigh informed the meeting that he was proud to be a member of the Cricket Club which had now been in existence for 130 years, his aim was to see sport overall improve in Horwich and was particularly concerned that recently the Cricket Club had fallen behind in grounds investment compared to nearby clubs such as Blackrod and was asking if support from Horwich Town Council was available.

Resolved to return to Committee.

Mr Leigh was informed that there was considerable grant funding available from the Town Council in the current financial year and groups were encouraged to apply before the closing date at the end of February. S106 allocation was a matter for consideration by Bolton Council, although Ward Councillors for Horwich could make representations. It had become apparent that the situation regarding the ownership of the lease continued to prevent the Cricket Club from accessing large amounts of funding from bodies such as Sport England, however Mr Leigh was informed that a local football club, who were not leaseholders, had recently been awarded substantial grant funding and was advised to contact them for advice.

In response to a query, Councillor Brady confirmed that the Cricket Club did not meet the criteria for funding from Town Centre Regeneration as it falls outside the terms of reference as a private club. While the situation with the lease was outside the remit of the Town Council, a suggestion was made that the Sports Advisory Group could liaise with Horwich RMI and the Cricket Club and set up a meeting for the two parties to discuss a possible way forward.

Mr Leigh was thanked for attending the meeting.

TO APPROVE ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT – SCHEDULE ATTACHED:

FG 7239 Resolved to approve the accounts for payment amounting to £ 7,810.95.

Franking Sense
(Quarterly copy charges for Xerox 7200i
and Xerox C405 Apr – Jun 2020) £10.95

Bolton Council
(Christmas Lighting 2020) £7,800.00

Payment to Bolton Council was made in accordance with LGA 1972 s144.

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

- FG 7240
- a. LALC: timetable for training workshops in 2021.
 - b. Bolton Council: consultation – Statement of Licensing Policy.
 - c. Bolton Council: minutes of Horwich Town Centre Steering Group meeting held on 8 September 2020.
 - d. NALC: consultation – Land Registry Survey.
 - e. NALC: Covid-19 update
 - f. Summary of Town Councillors' casework.

The Town Clerk's report was noted.

REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES – FOR INFORMATION ONLY:

- FG 7182
- a. Town Mayor – Councillor Stone was pleased to see Horwich moving forward with the Covid-19 vaccination programme after a slow start and welcomed the generosity of local businesses which had ensured the availability of additional "pods".
 - b. Horwich Ward Councillors – Councillor Wright reported that the collapsed drain at the junction of Vale Avenue/Crown Lane had been repaired. Also details of prior notification for a 5G telecoms mast on Mansell Way next to the Meadows housing estate. Councillor Brady reported that work on the budget was ongoing at Bolton. Also, damaged/missing cobbles had been repaired at Sparrow Park and Malcolm Russell had confirmed that he would look at the damaged lights to see if they could be repaired or replaced. At the recent meeting of the Town Centre Regeneration Steering Group, the subject of public toilets had been raised. Councillor Brady would look into availability of District Centre funding for this purpose and also obtain advice from Adlington Town Council on how their public toilet is managed by volunteers.
 - c. Reports from Representatives on Outside Bodies as per the approved list.
None.

Reports from Representatives were noted.

IN VIEW OF THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE BUSINESS ABOUT TO BE TRANSCATED IT IS ADVISABLE IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST THAT THE PRESS AND PUBLIC SHOULD BE TEMPORARILY EXCLUDED AND IF PRESENT SHOULD BE ASKED TO LEAVE THE MEETING.