

Horwich Town Council Annual Report 2021/2022

After two years of the Covid-19 pandemic, including intermittent local and national lockdowns, restrictions were finally lifted in June 2021 although it is recognised that the social and economic effects of the pandemic will continue to be felt in local communities for a long time. In line with national guidance, Council returned to in-person meetings at the Council Chamber in May 2021.

Council has continued with its role providing add-on services and facilities to the community of Horwich, having allocated funds in the budget for environmental initiatives such as spring and summer planting of the town centre flower troughs, additional winter gritting for some of the hillier parts of the town and provision of free dog waste bags. Council has consulted throughout the year with the unitary authority, Bolton Council, on a wide range of matters of importance to the parish such as major planning issues.



Council has undertaken new initiatives that had been delayed due to the pandemic, including the installation of a safety fence along the boundary of Green Lane playing fields and funding for activities for children and young people in Horwich, delivered by Bolton Council Play and Youth Services, including skate parks, play sessions and outreach work targeting anti-social behaviour.

Civic medals were awarded to Delia McGeehan and Colin Myers in recognition to their years of service to the community in a voluntary capacity. A civic plaque was installed on the clubhouse at Horwich RMI Cricket Club along with a sign to commemorate the site of the former 'Tin Mission' church on land off Lord Street.

The Council's website www.horwich.gov.uk continues to provide useful information about the council and the community. In addition, the council has its own Facebook page, along with a quarterly newsletter available digitally.

Council has continued to award grant funding to various local voluntary and community groups and organisations which have had to deal with plans disrupted, events cancelled and fundraising activities affected due to the impact of the pandemic.



Following easing of lockdown restrictions, the Community Centre re-opened fully in the summer and welcomed back its regular groups as well as starting up some new community-based initiatives, including a weekly lunch club for older and vulnerable people and a parent and toddler session every Tuesday. The Centre also continues

to provide Citizens Advice drop-in sessions on the first Friday of the month and is a drop off point for donations for Urban Outreach Grub Tub foodbank. The Centre also became the temporary home of Horwich Library for several months while the building was closed for building work.

After its cancellation in 2020, Council was pleased to be able to hold the annual Lighting of the Civic Christmas Tree Service which traditionally marks the start of the festive season in the town. Another casualty of lockdown restrictions had been the annual Remembrance Sunday Parade and Service which was able to take place in 2021. Again, working with Chorley Council and the Royal British Legion, the Town Council funded the illumination of Rivington Pike with a red poppy on three sides on the evening of Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day in commemoration of the fallen.



Councillor Sue Denton was appointed Chair of the Council and Town Mayor for the civic year 2021 – 2022 and following easing of restrictions was able to accept a number of mayoral invitations. Council asked the public for nominations for ‘Community Champions’, including a category for ‘Young Community Champion’ to recognise the efforts of individuals in Horwich who went above and beyond to help the community during lockdown and Helena Flanagan was presented with a certificate of appreciation from the Town Mayor before December’s Town Council meeting.

Sadly, in August 2021 former Councillor Joyce Kellett passed away, having served on the Town Council from 1995 -2019, as Town Mayor in 2001 – 2002, again in 2012 – 2013 and as Deputy Town Mayor 2017 – 2018 and also, Norman Pendlebury who had worked tirelessly in a voluntary capacity for many local organisations as well as making an invaluable contribution to Horwich Heritage since it started in 1995.

In line with advice, staff adopted working hybrid practices, with time divided between home and office working and continued to work with councillors to develop the role of the council and maintain high standards of professionalism in the council’s activities with staff training ongoing, and with all council members encouraged to take up training opportunities offered by LALC on the role of councillors and council procedures. The external auditors found no matters for concern for the financial year 2020/2021 and internal auditors reported that they are satisfied that financial controls and systems are effective. The annual risk assessment has been undertaken, the internal system for financial control has been reviewed and the council’s policies, including new employment policies and contract have continued to be reviewed and updated.

The role of a town councillor still remains completely voluntary; members do not receive any payment or claim any expenses. While facing new challenges and implementing new initiatives, Council continues to build on foundations already in

place, keeping the best of tradition while continuing to contribute to the ongoing success of the modern community which is Horwich.

Due to the continuing effects of the coronavirus outbreak, Council has found itself in unprecedented and challenging times over the last two years and post pandemic, our thoughts are for the health and wellbeing of the residents of our own and all other communities.

Councillor S. Denton
Town Mayor 2021/2022

Horwich Town Council can be contacted via:

The Town Clerk, Horwich Town Council Office, Horwich Community Centre,
Beaumont Road, Horwich, Bolton BL6 7BG
Tel: 01204 691090 (answerphone in operation)
Email: townclerk@horwich.gov.uk

Individual Councillors' contact details can be found in the Council's newsletter or on the councillors/officers' page of our website www.horwich.gov.uk

