



Present

Chairman

Councillor Whitehead

Councillors

Councillor Baron

Councillor Butterworth

Councillor Burton

Councillor Chorlton

Councillor Greenwood

Clerk of the Council: Miss R Hodson

Five members of public were present; no members of the press were present.

Minutes of the Meeting of
WHITWORTH TOWN COUNCIL held on
THURSDAY 15th January 2026 at
7.30pm in the Council Chamber

Councillor Neal
Councillor Rhodes
Councillor Ritson
Councillor Smith

173. To receive apologies and the reasons for absence.

Apologies were received from Councillor Whitworth who was unwell and Councillor Blezard who had another engagement.

174. To receive any Declarations of Interest.

Councillor Chorlton declared a personal interest in the schedule of payments and Councillor Neal declared a personal interest in LALC.

175. To consider the minutes of the meeting held on 18th December 2025, and to approve them by the signature of the chair.

It was resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 18th December 2025 were correct and should be approved by the signature of the Chairman as a correct record. This was moved by Councillor Baron and seconded by Councillor Smith.

176. Public Question Time.

A member of the public made a statement about Whitworth Cemetery and Councillor Whitehead requested this be emailed to councillors for their response.

A member of the public asked if there was anything that Whitworth Council can do to rectify the damage that has been done to Whitworth Cemetery. Councillor Smith responded that he has already raised this with RBC and Councillor Neal reported that he had raised the repairs needed to the chapel buildings with RBC also and suggested formally requesting a meeting with RBC's Chief Executive. Councillor Baron suggested having a separate meeting as a quorum to pool resources. A member of the public asked if the tree planting at Waingap Woods can be publicised on the Whitworth Town Council website and if the Environment Agency could be contacted by members of Whitworth Town Council regarding Albert Mill. Councillor Baron responded and gave details of his communications with the Environment Agency.

A member of the public asked for an update on the Trim Trail. Councillor Whitehead responded that she would look into this and update the resident after the meeting.

177. Planning Applications for consideration and comment:

- none

178. To receive and note the minutes of the Finance Monitoring Committee meeting held on 8th January 2026.

It was resolved that Council receive and note the minutes of the Finance Monitoring Committee held on 8th January 2026. This was moved by Councillor Neal and seconded by Councillor Ritson.

179. To receive and note the nine-month outturn.

It was resolved that Council receive and note the nine-month outturn, as presented by the clerk. This was moved by Councillor Neal and seconded by Councillor Smith.

180. To receive, and if appropriate accept, the planned budget for the 2026-2027 financial year. It was resolved that Council receive and accept the planned budget for the 2026-2027 financial year. This was moved by Councillor Neal and seconded by Councillor Baron. Councillor Neal requested that it be placed on record his thanks to the Clerk, Abbie and the members of the Finance Monitoring Committee for their hard work in preparing the budget.

181. To set the Precept upon the rating authority (Rossendale Borough Council) for the financial year 2026-2027. It was resolved that Council levies on Rossendale Borough Council a precept for the financial year 2026/2027 to the sum of £83,914. This was moved by Councillor Neal and seconded by Councillor Ritson.

182. To confirm staff wage rates for 2026/2027. It was resolved that Council confirm that staff will be paid at least the minimum wage rates for their employment from April 2026 onwards. This was moved by Councillor Neal and seconded by Councillor Smith.

183. To nominate a Deputy Mayor of Whitworth for the 2026/2027 municipal year. It was resolved that Councillor Scott Smith be appointed Deputy Mayor of Whitworth for the 2026/2027 municipal year. This was moved by Councillor Neal and seconded by Councillor Burton.

184. To review, and if appropriate adopt, a Sickness Absence Policy. It was resolved that Council adopt the proposed Sickness Absence Policy. This was moved by Councillor Burton and seconded by Councillor Smith.

185. To appoint additional councillor(s) onto the Finance Monitoring Committee and Tourism and Leisure Committee. It was resolved that Councillor Mackenzie Ritson be appointed onto both the Finance Monitoring Committee and the Tourism and Leisure Committee. This was moved by Councillor Chorlton and seconded by Councillor Smith.

186. To consider appointing a new Honorary Townsman. Councillor Whitehead explained the reasons behind a member of the public's nomination of Marilyn Jones. Councillors unanimously accepted the nomination. It was resolved that Marilyn Jones be appointed an Honorary Townsman of Whitworth. This was moved by Councillor Smith and seconded by Councillor Neal.

187. To receive the report of the Town Mayor (not for discussion). The Mayor reported that she has had numerous invitations to upcoming events in Whitworth and that she has an upcoming sponsored silence fundraiser on 1st February, during which she will be at various locations around Whitworth. She thanked everyone for their continued support and said that she was looking forward to a busy and positive few months ahead.

188. The Chairman or Clerk to answer questions from Councillors (Standing Orders 16 & 24 – 27, for information only).
None.

189. To receive reports from delegates and representatives to outside organisations (for information only). Councillor Baron reported that he had been informed from LCC that the grit bins in Whitworth had been refilled. Councillor Greenwood reported that she had been informed at Whitworth's Multi Agency meeting that Constable Scott Bentley has emigrated and is no longer Whitworth's dedicated police officer. Councillor Greenwood also reported that she has been liaising with an officer at RBC regarding a women and girls task force.

Councillor Rhodes reported that the Environment and Wildlife Committee would be meeting soon and asked for suggestions for topics for future school educational presentations.

Councillor Baron requested members focus strength on Scout Moor II.

Councillor Neal reported that the next Whitworth Community Partnership meeting takes place at The Ashcroft on Tuesday 27th January at 6.30pm.

190. **To receive and, if appropriate, adopt the financial statements presented by the Clerk.**

It was resolved that Council receive and adopt the financial statement presented by the clerk. This was moved by Councillor Ritson and seconded by Councillor Smith.

191. **To authorise the signing of orders for payment: schedule 12, 2025-2026.**

The clerk explained the Schedule of Accounts Payable in the form of Report 12, 2025-2026 and asked for approval. It was resolved that approval be given for the Schedule of Accounts payments. This was moved by Councillor Neal and seconded by Councillor Smith.

192. **To carry out the internal audit.**

Members carried out an internal audit of bank statements, invoices and Schedule of Accounts Payable; balances against bank statements and receipts and petty cash. All was found to be in order.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.35pm.