



Whitworth Town Council

Minutes of the Meeting of
WHITWORTH TOWN COUNCIL held on
THURSDAY 19th February 2026 at
7.30pm in the Council Chamber

Present

Chairman

Councillor Whitehead

Councillors

Councillor Baron

Councillor Blezard

Councillor Butterworth

Councillor Burton

Councillor Chorlton

Clerk of the Council: Miss R Hodson

Councillor Neal

Councillor Rhodes

Councillor Ritson

Councillor Smith

Councillor Whitworth

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

193. To receive apologies and the reasons for absence.

Apologies were received from Cllr Greenwood who was unable to attend due to a family engagement.

194. To receive any Declarations of Interest.

Councillors Neal and Chorlton declared a personal interest in the schedule of payments.
Councillors Neal, Ritson and Smith declared a personal interest in agenda item 14.

195. To consider the minutes of the meeting held on 15th January 2026, and to approve them by the signature of the chair.

It was resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 15th January 2026 were correct and should be approved by the signature of the Chairman as a correct record. This was moved by Councillor Whitworth and seconded by Councillor Baron.

196. Public Question Time.

A member of the public raised issues regarding the refilling of grit bins, the repairs to the wall in Market St (Shawforth), the state of the pavement on Oak Street and the wall at the bottom of Oak Street. Cllrs Butterworth and Ritson reported that the grit bins are on a schedule to be refilled and that the reporting system for LCC is being revamped. Councillor Neal reported that he would raise the issue of the wall on Oak Street at RBC, the other issues were the responsibility of LCC. A member of the public informed councillors regarding the history of the land that LCC have earmarked for sale near Landgate and asked if councillors would lodge objections to the sale. Councillors responded and Councillor Ritson suggested looking into a Community Asset Transfer. A member of the public spoke about the approval for planning at Cowm and asked if the Section 106 money could be spent in Whitworth. Councillor Whitehead responded that she will look into this.

197. Planning Applications for consideration and comment:

- None

198. To receive and note the minutes of the Finance Monitoring Committee meeting held on 3rd February 2026.

It was resolved that Council receive and note the minutes of the Finance Monitoring Committee held on 3rd February 2026. This was moved by Councillor Neal and seconded by Councillor Burton.

199. To receive a recommendation from the Finance Monitoring Committee regarding the processing of Whitworth Town Council's payroll.
It was resolved that Council approve the recommendation from the Finance Monitoring Committee regarding the processing of Whitworth Town Council's payroll. This was moved by Councillor Chorlton and seconded by Councillor Neal.
200. To receive a recommendation from the Finance Monitoring Committee regarding Local Government Reorganisation.
It was resolved that this item is moved to the end of the agenda. This was moved by Councillor Chorlton and seconded by Councillor Smith.
201. To receive a recommendation from the Finance Monitoring Committee regarding Whitworth Town Council's Employer Pension Fund contributions 2026-2029.
Councillor Ritson explained about the differing proposed buffers regarding LCC's Pension Fund.
It was resolved that Council agree with the recommendations of LCC's Pension Fund Committee. This was moved by Councillor Smith and seconded by Councillor Ritson.
202. To discuss commenting on the following Lancashire County Council's proposals:
- a) To revoke the "Lancashire County Council (Rossendale Borough Area) (On Street Parking Places, Prohibition and Restriction of Waiting) Consolidation Order 2009" insofar as it relates to Item (85)b)(vi) of Schedule 10.01.
 - b) To introduce a prohibition of waiting at any time in the following lengths of road
 - i) Hall Street, Whitworth, Rochdale, the south side, from a point 83 metres west of its junction with the centreline of Spodden Fold for a distance of 27.5 metres in a westerly direction;
 - ii) Market Street, Whitworth, Rochdale, the west side, from its junction with the centreline of Station Road for a distance of 176.5 metres in a southerly direction;
- It was resolved that Council are in favour with all the above proposals from LCC. This was moved by Councillor Baron and seconded by Councillor Smith.
203. To review and if appropriate adopt the Annual Investment Strategy.
It was resolved that Council adopt the Annual Investment Strategy. This was moved by Councillor Neal and seconded by Councillor Burton.
204. To review and if appropriate adopt the Financial Risk Assessment and Financial Procedures.
It was resolved that Council adopt the Financial Risk Assessment and Financial Procedures. This was moved by Councillor Baron and seconded by Councillor Smith.
205. To review and if appropriate adopt the Financial Regulations Policy.
It was resolved that Council adopt the Financial Regulations Policy. This was moved by Councillor Neal and seconded by Councillor Blezard. Councillor Neal requested that the Finance Monitoring Committee review this policy annually.
206. To discuss Whitworth Town Council participating in the Local Government Reorganisation consultation.
Councillors discussed this and gave their collective responses to the consultation.

207. To consider commenting on Rossendale Borough Council's updated Alterations and Extensions to Residential Properties Draft Supplementary Planning Document.

It was resolved that Council defer this item to the next meeting of the General Purposes Committee. This was moved by Councillor Neal and seconded by Councillor Burton.

208. To receive the report of the Town Mayor (not for discussion).

The Mayor reported that she recently had the pleasure of attending Cubs to speak with the young people about the things that are important in our village, and how they can help, get involved and make a difference in their community. She reported that it was wonderful to see their enthusiasm and interest and she was pleased that some of them again assisted with the tree planting event on 31st January, alongside so many members of our community. Together, an incredible 1,000 trees were planted in a record-breaking 74 minutes. She also had the pleasure of attending the WAMDS pantomime at St John's which was a great afternoon, full of laughter and local talent — a real credit to everyone involved.

She reported that she had met with Richard from WVHB to discuss the design of the bandstand that she hopes to see installed in the Memorial Gardens. The Mayor reported on her recent fundraising Sponsored Silence event. She thanked everyone for their support and reported that £1,515 was raised for the Mayor's Charity Fund. She reported that she is now accepting applications from community groups and charities. The Mayor reported that she has two upcoming fundraising events, a band concert featuring WVHB on 29th March at Hallfold Church and on 80s Day Disco on 25th April here at the Ashcroft, in place of a civic dinner. She is delighted that Mayors and dignitaries from other areas will be joining her.

209. The Chairman or Clerk to answer questions from Councillors (Standing Orders 16 & 24 – 27, for information only).

Councillor Neal asked if LCC's Highway officers could ensure that temporary traffic lights are manned.

Councillor Butterworth asked if any repairs to Market Street could continue for 24 hours a day.

Councillor Butterworth also asked if the Council could recognise members health conditions when requesting them to stand.

210. To receive reports from delegates and representatives to outside organisations (for information only).

Councillor Blezard reported that the TLC had had a productive recent meeting and praised Martin Duffy's enthusiasm.

Councillor Blezard reported that Whitworth Leisure Centre need investment from Whitworth Town Council and need more active members.

Councillor Blezard reported that Whitworth Sports Council are reviving the Sports Festival and are currently liaising with local schools. She requested that anyone with any relevant sporting contacts get in touch.

Councillor Smith reported that he is now Chair of Whitworth In Bloom and reported on recent planting at Waingap woods and WIB's plans at Healey Corner and The Bug.

Councillor Neal reported that he is in London next week and will pass on comments regarding Local Government Reorganisation.

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

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

212. To authorise the signing of orders for payment: schedule 13, 2025-2026.

The clerk explained the Schedule of Accounts Payable in the form of Report 13, 2025-2026 and asked for approval. It was resolved that approval be given for the Schedule of Accounts payments. This was moved by Councillor Smith and seconded by Councillor Whitworth.

It was resolved that the next item on the agenda be discussed to the exclusion of press and public. This was moved by Councillor Smith and seconded by Councillor Whitworth.

*** members of the public left the meeting ***

213. To receive a recommendation from the Finance Monitoring Committee regarding Local Government Reorganisation.

Councillors discussed this. It was resolved that Council accept the recommendations from the Finance Monitoring Committee regarding Local Government Reorganisation, with an amendment to request a discussion regarding capital funding. This was moved by Councillor Smith and seconded by Councillor Ritson.

*** members of the public returned to the chamber ***

214. 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 9.05pm.