

Minutes of the Meeting of

WHITWORTH TOWN COUNCIL held on

TUESDAY 22nd June 2023 at 7.30pm in the council chamber

Present

Chairman

Councillor M Royds

Councillors

Councillor R A Neal

Councillor D Chorlton

Councillor T Aldred

Councillor D Powell

Councillor G Baron

Councillor M Whitworth

Councillor J Whitehead

Councillor Kim Olaolu

Clerk of the Council: Miss R Hodson

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

19. To receive apologies and the reasons for absence.

Apologies were received from Councillor Blezard as he is on holiday and from Councillor Rhodes after the meeting who had an emergency at work and was unable to attend.

1. To receive any Declarations of Interest.

None.

###  To consider the minutes of the meeting held on 18 May 2023, and to approve them by the signature of the Chairman as a correct record.

It was resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 18May 2023, copies of which had been circulated to each Member, were correct and should be approved by the signature of the Chairman as a correct record. This was moved by Councillor Neal and seconded by Councillor Baron.

1. To consider the minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 30 May 2023, and to approve them by the signature of the Chairman as a correct record.

It was resolved that the minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 30May 2023, copies of which had been circulated to each Member, were correct and should be approved by the signature of the Chairman as a correct record. This was moved by Councillor Neal and seconded by Councillor Whitworth.

1. Public Question Time.

A member of the public asked Councillor Olaolu why she had objected to a planning application and expressed his displeasure at this. Councillor Olaolu replied that she was entitled to respond to a planning application as she felt appropriate. Councillor Powell explained that Whitworth Town Council itself had not objected to this application as it had been received during the pre-election period and that Rossendale Borough Council will make the overall decision regarding the application.

A member of the public asked what was being done for the staff at Whitworth Leisure Centre. Councillor Whitehead responded that she had called in and offered help writing cvs, etc and that she has spoken to the leader of Rossendale Borough Council about requesting that Rossendale Works should also be involved. Councillor Neal expressed his concern about the handling of this by Rossendale Leisure Trust.

A member of the public informed members that there are now issues with the cattle grid at Landgate. Councillor Olaolu informed the Council that she had contacted LCC and read out their response. Councillor Powell suggested contacting Lancashire County Councillor Scott Smith regarding this as he is lead member for Highways.

A member of the public asked how long is the wholesale polluting of Cowm Reservoir by stone dust from the quarry going to continue for. Councillor Olaolu stated that she had already contacted the Environment Agency and United Utilities regarding this and gave their responses. The member of the public considered the amount of water up there being wasted in its current unusable state.

A member of the public asked about the ownership of the former bus shelter near Tong Lane and expressed sadness about its current state. Councillor Neal responded that Rossendale Borough Council have claimed ownership of this at present. Councillor Powell stated that he hopes to get a resolution about its ownership as Whitworth Town Council consider that they own it. Councillor Whitehead said that she would take this up regarding the state of the building.

1. Planning Applications for consideration and comment:
2. *2023/0240 Land Off Hall Street Whitworth Rochdale Replacement stable plus open sided food store (Retrospective)*

Councillor Neal reported that he had called for this planning application to go to Development Committee at Rossendale Borough Council in his capacity as a Rossendale Borough Councillor. He stated that planning enforcement has visited this site in the past due to concerns raised. It was resolved that council object to this application on the grounds of the impact on the green belt, open countryside and inappropriate access. There is also no mention of how animal waste will be removed. There is also an apprehension of the destruction of an ancient PROW. This was moved by Councillor Neal and seconded by Councillor Baron.

1. *2023/0241 Erection of new bungalow, Mills Street, Whitworth, Rochdale*

Councillor Olaolu reported that she had contacted the planning officer regarding concerns about the ecological impact of the development. She stated that she is happy with the response received from the preliminary ecological appraisal lodged with the planning application. Councillor Neal commented that the application will be for the owner’s private use and will be doing more than is expected with regards to the ecological requirements required. It was resolved that council are in favour of this application. This was moved by Councillor Neal and seconded by Councillor Whitworth.

1. To receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report for the financial year 2022-2023 (attached).

Councillor Neal requested that it be placed on record the great appreciation for the work that the clerk has done with regard to the annual accounts for the financial year 2022 -2023. It was resolved that Council receives and notes the Annual Internal Auditors Report for the financial year 2022-2023. This was moved by Councillor Neal and seconded by Councillor Powell.

1. To adopt and approve the Statutory Annual Accounts for the financial year 2022-2023 (attached).

It was resolved that Council adopt and approve the Statutory Annual Accounts for the financial year 2022-2023. This was moved by Councillor Powell and seconded by Councillor Neal.

1. To adopt and approve Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the financial year 2022-2023 (attached).

It was resolved that Council accepts, adopts and approves Section 1 of the Annual Return form (annual governance statement) as follows:

Point 1: answered yes

Point 2: answered yes

Point 3: answered yes

Point 4: answered yes

Point 5: answered yes

Point 6: answered yes

Point 7: answered yes

Point 8: answered yes. This was moved by Councillor Chorlton and seconded by Councillor Whitehead.

1. To adopt and approve Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the financial year 2022-2023 (attached).

It was resolved that Council accepts, adopts, and approves of Section 2 of the Annual Return form (statement of accounts). This was moved by Councillor Neal and seconded by Councillor Whitworth.

1. To consider giving a donation to Whitworth Vale and Healey Band towards the costs of travel to the National Finals.

Councillor Powell stated that Whitworth Vale and Healey Band are fantastic ambassadors for Whitworth and asked that Council send congratulations to them for reaching the National Finals and wish them the best of luck in the competition. Councillor Neal reminded those present at the meeting that Whitworth Vale and Healey Band will also be holding a fundraiser on Sunday at Hallfold Church Hall. It was resolved that Council approve a donation of £250 to Whitworth Vale and Healey Band. This was moved by Councillor Powell and seconded by Councillor Neal.

1. To consider giving a donation to Stronger Together.

Councillor Whitehead reported that she had supported this group from the beginning and considered them to be doing a fantastic job. It was resolved that Council approve a donation of £300 to Stronger Together. This was moved by Councillor Whitehead and seconded by Councillor Powell.

1. To discuss proposed locations for Whitworth Town Council’s CCTV.

Councillor Neal gave members a history of where the CCTV had been placed previously and recommended that Whitworth Library should be considered for the CCTV’s location given the recent anti-social behaviour that has been occurring there. Councillor Powell stated that he has been attending to this area with other Whitworth In Bloom volunteers and was saddened that recent planting there had already been destroyed. Councillor Whitehead stated that permission needed to be sought from Lancashire County Council and Friends of Whitworth Library for this. It was resolved that Council approves Whitworth Library to be the location for Whitworth Town Council’s CCTV, provided that appropriate permissions can be sought. This was moved by Councillor Neal and seconded by Councillor Whitehead.

1. To discuss requesting Rossendale Borough Council to designate Hallfold as a conservation area.

Councillor Powell reported that he is the chair of Whitworth Community Partnership and informed members of a discussion that had occurred at the meeting held on Tuesday 13th June 2023. It was resolved that Council contact Cathy Fishwick (Chair of Rossendale Civic Trust) for the required information and then write to Rossendale Borough Council to request that Hallfold be designated a conservation area.

1. To consider responding to Rochdale Online’s request for a statement regarding Whitworth Leisure Centre.

Councillors discussed this. It was resolved that Councillor Royds draft a press release regarding Whitworth Leisure Centre, that is then circulated to all members for approval before release to all media outlets by the Clerk. This was moved by Councillor Baron and seconded by Councillor Whitehead.

1. To discuss setting up a staffing feedback working group.

Councillors Powell and Whitehead reported that they are happy to receive feedback from Whitworth Town Council employees and will liaise with the Borough and County councils regarding any issues raised.

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

The Mayor reported that he had a very enjoyable evening at Whitworth Town Council’s AGM. He had since written to Councillor Calderbank to thank him for his service to Whitworth Town Council and had received a wonderful reply from him. The Mayor also reported that he had attended RBC’s AGM and that he and his Mayoress were pleased to meet and converse with several RBC Councillors. He stated that he was then shocked to receive the information regarding the closure of Whitworth Leisure Centre the very next week and talked about the public meeting held on 1st June. The Mayor thanked Councillor Olaolu for her reading at his Civic Sunday service, led by mayoral chaplain Laura Brinicombe and how pleased he was that the Mayors of Rossendale, Rochdale, Hebden Royd and Todmorden could attend. He also reported that he was proud to represent Whitworth at Rossendale’s Flag Raising ceremony on Monday to mark the start of Armed Forces week. He stated that he had several engagements booked in the mayoral diary and was very much looking forward to representing Whitworth at these events.

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

None.

1. To authorise the signing of orders for payment: schedule 1, 2023-2024.

It was resolved that approval be given for the schedule of Accounts payable. This was moved by Councillor Neal and seconded by Councillor Chorlton.

1. 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.

1. To discuss the update from Rossendale Borough Council.

This item was added to the agenda using LGA 1974, Schedule 100B, point 4 as the Chairman of Whitworth Town Council considered the item to be a matter of urgency due to an update being given to Whitworth Town Council by Rossendale Borough Council after the original agenda was published.

It was resolved that this item be discussed to the exclusion of the press and public. This was moved by Councillor Neal and seconded by Councillor Powell. Councillors discussed this update.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.40pm.