

Minutes of the Meeting of

WHITWORTH TOWN COUNCIL held on

THURSDAY 21st September 2023 at 7.30pm in the council chamber

Present

Chairman

Councillor M Royds

Councillors

Councillor R A Neal

Councillor T Aldred

Councillor D Powell

Councillor G Baron

Councillor M Whitworth

Councillor K Olaolu

Councillor S Rhodes

Councillor L Burton

Councillor R Blezard

Councillor D Chorlton

Clerk of the Council: Miss R Hodson

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

### To receive apologies and the reasons for absence.

Apologies were received in advance of the meeting by Cllr Whitehead who had another prearranged engagement.

1. To receive any Declarations of interest.

None.

### To consider the minutes of the meeting held on 20th July 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 20July 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.

### To consider the minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 1st August 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 1st August 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.

### To consider the minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 17th August 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 17th August 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.

### Public Question Time.

None.

### Planning Applications for consideration and comment:

1. 2023/0424 12 Wallbank Drive Whitworth Rochdale Lancashire OL12 8TZ. Proposal: 6M wide rear dormer extension. Proposed dormer to have a black upvc clad finish.

It was resolved that Council have no objections to this planning application. This was moved by Cllr Neal and seconded by Cllr Powell.

1. 2023/0403 Millgate Market Street Shawforth Rossendale OL12 8NX. Proposal: Change of use from offices to 12 no. apartments

Councillors discussed this. It was resolved that Council object to this planning application on the grounds of overdevelopment of the site, concerns regarding parking, the lack of an ecology and tree report and highway safety grounds. This was moved by Cllr Powell and seconded by Cllr Olaolu.

1. To receive and note the Minutes of the Finance Monitoring Committee meeting held on 12 September 2023.

It was resolved that Council receive and note the minutes of the meeting of the Finance Monitoring Committee on 12th September 2023. This was moved by Councillor Neal and seconded by Councillor Olaolu.

1. To discuss the employment of a new parish lengthsman.

Councillors discussed this. It was resolved that the Finance Monitoring Committee investigate the cost effectiveness of employing a new lengthsman and report back to Council. This was moved by Cllr Neal and seconded by Cllr Powell.

1. To review the lease agreement regarding Whitworth Leisure Centre.

Councillors discussed this. It was resolved that Council suspend standing orders to allow members of the public to speak. This was moved by Cllr Powell and seconded by Cllr Neal. A member of Whitworth Leisure Centre CIC expressed concern that any delay by calling a further meeting might mean that the 30th September deadline would be missed. It was resolved that reinstate standing orders. This was moved by Cllr Neal and seconded by Cllr Powell. It was resolved that Council continue to discuss this with the press and public present. This was moved by Cllr Chorlton and seconded by Cllr Olaolu. It was resolved that in the event RBC Cabinet approval is given for the Community Asset transfer of Whitworth Leisure Centre, authority be given to Cllr Mike Royds in his capacity as Mayor to proceed with the transfer and enter into all legal agreements upon completion of all necessary due diligence.

1. To appoint a named member of Whitworth Town Council to work closely with Whitworth Leisure Centre CIC and report back to Council on a regular basis regarding income, expenditure and any property issues.

Cllr Royds asked for councillors who would be available during working hours who were not currently members of Whitworth Leisure Centre CIC to volunteer for this role. It was resolved that Cllr Neal be appointed the named member of Whitworth Town Council to work closely with Whitworth Leisure Centre CIC and report back to Council on a regular basis. This was moved by Cllr Powell and seconded by Cllr Whitworth.

1. To appoint a named member of Whitworth Town Council to oversee any works undertaken by any contractors for Whitworth Leisure Centre.

It was resolved that Cllr Blezard be appointed the name member of Whitworth Town Council to oversee any works undertaken by any contractors for Whitworth Leisure Centre. This was moved by Cllr Powell and seconded by Cllr Neal. It was resolved that the two appointments above continue whilst Whitworth Leisure Centre remains under the ownership of Whitworth Town Council.

1. To approve and accept the annual return as audited by the external auditors.

It was resolved that Council approve and accept the annual return as audited by the external auditors. This was moved by Cllr Powell and seconded by Cllr Whitworth.

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

The Mayor reported that he had had a hectic August due to his wife’s serious eye operation and with the extra meetings held by Council. He thanked the volunteers who had assisted with the road closure for the Rushcart and the TLC volunteers who had organised the event and was pleased at how well attended it was. He reported on attending other Civic Sunday services at Hebden Royd and Shaw & Crompton Parish Councils and that the mayoral diary is filling up for the months ahead. He stated what an honour and a pleasure it is to be able to represent Whitworth at these events. He also reminded councillors that his upcoming Business and Community Awards are being held at The Ashcroft on Saturday 28th October and he is also having a curry night at The Ashoka on Thursday 23rd November, more details coming soon.

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

Cllr Royds read out a personal statement on behalf of Cllr Olaolu. Cllr Royds reminded councillors of a previous email he had sent out to them all regarding the behaviour of councillors and the need for them to support each other and that personal insults are not acceptable.

Cllr Neal asked if the Mayor could contact LCC to ask why the runoff for the traffic lights on Market Street near Oakenshaw is so long and that it may cause traffic issue through Whitworth.

1. 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 Neal and seconded Councillor Powell.

### To authorise the signing of orders for payment: schedule 5, 2023-2024.

The clerk explained the Schedule of Accounts Payable in the form of Report 5, 2023-2024 and asked for approval. It was resolved that approval be given for the Schedule of Accounts payable. This was moved by Councillor Powell and seconded by Councillor Whitworth.

1. To discuss Whitworth Town Council being the host organisation for a proposed ranger service.

Cllr Powell stated that he agreed with this in principle but had some reservations. He stated that if this involves zero work for the clerk and minimal contribution from the council as he was concerned that Council have taken on so much recently. Cllr Olaolu explained that the project needs a host so that organisations can be approached for contributions to it. It was resolved that organisations can be approached for contributions and the council will consider being its host at a later date. This was moved by Cllr Baron and seconded by Cllr Whitworth.

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 Heads of Terms for Whitworth Leisure centre.

This was not discussed as the Heads of Terms had not been received.

1. To discuss the offer from LCC regarding Jubilee Walk.

Cllr Powell stated he was disappointed with LCC’s response to this. He stated that the site was offered for free two years ago and now they want £10,000. Cllr Baron expressed his displeasure at the response from LCC and thanked Cllr Olaolu for her work so far with the area. Cllr Olaolu stated that she had already replied to LCC but is prepared to respond further regarding the land being gifted years ago and the ecological implications of developing this site. Cllr Baron highlighted the Public Right of Way that goes through the land. Cllr Neal reminded Council about previous dealings with LCC regarding this area. Cllr Rhodes enquired as to the acreage of the site and to its classification. It was resolved that Council write to senior officers at LCC and ask them to gift this land to the people of Whitworth. This was moved by Cllr Chorlton and seconded by Cllr Whitworth.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.46pm.