

Minutes of the Meeting of

WHITWORTH TOWN COUNCIL held on

THURSDAY 25th January 2024 at 7.30pm in the council chamber

Present

Chairman

Councillor M Royds

Councillors

Councillor G Baron

Councillor L Burton

Councillor D Chorlton

Councillor A Neal

Councillor K Olaolu

Councillor S Rhodes

Councillor J Whitehead

Clerk of the Council: Miss R Hodson

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

A minute’s silence was held at the start of the meeting as a mark of respect for former councillor and past Mayor of Whitworth Mrs Lynda Barnes.

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

Apologies were received in advance of the meeting by Councillor Aldred who was unwell and Councillor Whitworth who was caring for a family member.

1. To receive any Declarations of interest.

None.

### To consider the minutes of the meeting held on 14th December 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 14th December 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 Whitehead

### To consider the minutes of the Extraordinary meeting held on 4th January 2024, 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 4th January 2024, 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 Baron and seconded by Councillor Chorlton.

### Public Question Time.

A member of the public requested the council’s assistance in obtaining information from Rossendale Borough Council (RBC) regarding the remaining proceeds from the sale of Landgate in 2012. They stated that the borough councillor for the area is pursuing this and asked if the Mayor could write an email or letter as well, on behalf of Whitworth Town Council. They stated that this information is required to assist with a funding application, the deadline of which is 31st January 2024.

A member of the public stated that RBC had issued a leaflet in the past regarding the Dam Wall at Cowm Reservoir and that they now consider the wall to be dangerous, as they are concerned that the fissures that were filled in may be wearing away. Councillor Olaolu replied that she had been communicating with the Environment Agency regarding the pollution at the reservoir and will enquire regarding the wall. Councillor Royds stated that United Utilities have done an inspection of the wall in the past.

A member of the public asked if Councillor Olaolu was investigating the pollution at Cowm reservoir on behalf of the council and why Councillor Olaolu chose Chris Baron. Councillor Olaolu replied that she was working on behalf of the town council on this matter and that he is an employee of the Environment Agency located at Knutsford. The member of the public and Councillor Olaolu agreed to continue the discussion outside of the meeting.

A member of the public stated that councillors had been provided with a map of Whitworth Cemetery and Facit Garden Centre and expressed concern about the state of the drains at the Cemetery, which was causing a large volume of water to overflow into the garden centre. Councillor Olaolu reported that she had already made arrangements to meet a representative from RBC at the Cemetery on Monday regarding this. The member of the public reported that the volume of water was having a direct impact on the day today functioning of the garden centre. Councillor Neal recommended that Andy Taylor of RBC be asked to attend on Monday too. The clerk will enquire regarding maps of culverts etc at the Cemetery that may assist with this.

### Planning Applications for consideration and comment:

1. *2024/0005 – 7 Westgate, Whitworth, OL12 8UW – Householder: two storey side extension with single storey extension front and rear.*

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

1. *2024/0014 – 543 Market Street, Whitworth, Ol12 8QW – Proposal: proposed change of use from shop to hot food takeaway.*

Councillors discussed this. It was resolved that Council support this planning application on the condition that there is adequate storage for refuse bins. This was moved by Councillor Whitehead and seconded by Councillor Burton.

1. To receive and note the draft meeting schedule for the 2024/2025 municipal year.

It was resolved that Council accept the draft meeting schedule for the 2024/2025 municipal year. This was moved by Councillor Baron and seconded by Councillor Olaolu.

1. To receive and note the amended meeting schedule for the 2023/2024 municipal year.

It was resolved that Council accept the amended meeting schedule for the 2023/2024 municipal year, with an amendment that the April 2024 meeting be removed from the schedule as this would be during the pre-election period for Rossendale Borough Council elections. This was moved by Councillor Neal and seconded by Councillor Whitehead.

1. To receive and note the minutes of the Finance Monitoring Committee meeting held on the 8th January 2024.

It was resolved that Council receive and note the minutes of the Finance Monitoring Committee meeting held on the 8th January 2024. This was moved by Councillor Neal and seconded by Councillor Olaolu.

1. To receive, and if appropriate accept, the planned budget for the coming financial year.

It was resolved that Council accept the planned budget for the financial year 2024/2025. This was moved by Councillor Neal and seconded by Councillor Olaolu.

1. To set the Precept upon the rating authority (Rossendale Borough Council) for the financial year 2024/2025.

It was resolved that Council levies on Rossendale Borough Council a precept for the financial year 2024/2025 to the sum of £69,901.50. This was moved by Councillor Neal and seconded by Councillor Rhodes. Councillor Neal asked that his thanks to the members of the Precept Working Group and the clerk for their hard work be noted.

### To discuss quotations received and works planned for repairs to the Mildred Crabtree Picnic Area.

Councillors discussed this. It was resolved that the item be deferred until the ownership of the area has been confirmed. This was moved by councillor Chorlton and seconded by Councillor Burton.

1. To discuss the Hedgehog Highway Project.

Councillor Rhodes thanked the individual who approached council with this and thought that the project could be utilised throughout Town Council land. She also considered that the planning authority could be contacted to ask them to incorporate these in the future. Councillor Olaolu suggested that Whitworth Town Council should consider having a Wildlife and Environment Committee. It was resolved that Council support the Hedgehog Highway Project. This was moved by Councillor Rhodes and seconded by Councillor Olaolu.

1. To discuss the Whitworth Town Council website.

Councillor Baron updated members regarding a zoom meeting he had had with the clerk and the current website provider. Councillors discussed this. It was resolved that councillors defer this item until the next meeting to allow them to evaluate the current content on the website. This was moved by Councillor Whitehead and seconded by Councillor Chorlton.

### To receive the report of the Town Mayor.

The Mayor reported that he had been busy assisting with Whitworth Leisure Centre and had helped to empty the learner pool of debris and obsolete items. He was pleased to report that the Mayoress had had her cast removed and that her arm was healing well. He stated that he was looking forward to some upcoming functions, including his own Spring Party, details of which will be coming soon.

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

Cllr Neal asked the Chairman if he would email or write to councillors and ask them to submit apologies if they are unable to attend meetings. Councillor Neal considered that the failure to submit apologies was both disrespectful to the clerk and the people of Whitworth.

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

Cllr Olaolu reported that she had contacted the Salford Diocese regarding Jubilee Walk and that they can find no record of the land being gifted to the church or Father Brown. She stated that she had had communications with Lancashire Wildlife Trust and had been assured that information was being passed to Natural England regarding the damage caused by illegal off-road bikes. Councillor Olaolu also reported that she had been in contact with Rob Hope from LCC regarding air pollution issues in Whitworth and that communication was ongoing regarding this. Councillor Olaolu also informed members that the recent Whitworth Multi Agency meeting had included updates from the police, Healey Dell fly tipping and fire issues and anti-social behaviour at Masseycroft.

Cllr Chorlton reported that the TLC had held a very busy Duck Race and that the TLC are looking to increase the number of ducks available for sponsorship this year.

Cllr Whitehead asked if anyone would like to volunteer with Whitworth In Bloom as they are currently low in members. She also reported that the Skyline walk will take place on 12th May this year and volunteers are needed to assist with this too.

Cllr Rhodes reported that she had been communication with Kathy Fishwick regarding the proposed Hallfold Conservation Area and was in the process of setting up a public meeting regarding this. She also reported back from the recent Whitworth Community Partnership meeting which included discussions regarding air pollution, policing and Whitworth Medical Centre

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 Whitehead and seconded by Councillor Neal.

### To authorise the signing of orders for payment: schedule 10, 2023-2024.

The clerk explained the Schedule of Accounts Payable in the form of Report 10, 2023-2024 and asked for approval. It was resolved that approval be given for the Schedule of Accounts payable. This was moved by Councillor Neal and seconded by Councillor Whitehead.

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.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.10pm.