



MORECAMBE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of Morecambe Town Council on 7th May 2020 **Due to the Covid19 pandemic and related restrictions the meeting was held remotely using the Zoom Cloud meetings application**

Present: Councillors: Janice. Hanson (Chair); Paul Anderton; June Ashworth; Mariusz Balcer; Mirka Balcer John Bates; Vicky Boyd-Power; Roger Cleet; Trisha Clarke; Ian Clift; Glynis Dennison; Merv Evans; Jake Goodwin; Patricia Heath; Debbie Jenkins; Cary Matthews; Jack Newton; Jim Pilling; Margaret Pattison and David Whitaker

In Attendance: B. Bailey (Town Clerk) and one member of the public

20042. **Apologies for Absence:** Apologies were received from Councillors Tony Anderson; Alex Ashworth; Shirley Burns; Jason Firth and Paula Ross-Clasper,
20043. **Declarations of Interests:** Town Councillors who serve on Lancaster City Council's planning committee declared an interest in agenda item 20050. As an elected County Councillor, Cllr Pattison requested, and was granted, dispensation on any discussions relating to Lancashire County Council.
20044. **Chairman's Urgent Business:** Members were asked to consider the following matters:
- 1) **Remote Meeting Policy:** The draft policy recognised the opportunities offered by a remote meeting during the current lockdown due to the coronavirus pandemic, and set out in new legislation, as well as on other occasions when a face to face meeting is not possible. The policy set out guidance for Councillors, officers, press and public on how such meetings will be conducted to assist in debate and decision making. After some discussion, it was **RESOLVED** that the Remote Meeting Policy be adopted;
 - 2) **Letter from Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP:** The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities & Local Government had written to all parish and town councils to thank them for the '*fantastic way*' in which they had responded to the challenge of coronavirus' within their communities. The letter commented on the '*£3.2 billion additional funding made available to councils, with the latest tranche of £1.6 billion including a larger share for lower tier councils*'.
ACTION: Town Clerk to write to Lancaster City Council to make enquiries about the procedure and criteria for gaining access to this funding.

3) **Public Rights of Way – Local Delivery Scheme:** Members considered an invitation from Lancashire County Council to opt-in to the scheme for 2020/21. The scheme offers a grant of £500 to carry out minor maintenance, way-marking and vegetation clearance of public rights of way in the local community. This led to a discussion on the possible appointment of a Lengthsman to carry out wider ground maintenance and repair works around the town.

It was then **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk makes the necessary arrangements for Morecambe Town Council to opt-in to the Local Delivery Scheme 2020/21 and that the role of a Town Lengthsman be considered at a future meeting.

20045. **Minutes:** Members were reminded that the Minutes of the meeting held on the 6th February 2020 had been challenged and, consequently, had not been signed. Members were asked to consider whether the unchanged Minutes of that meeting could now be approved. They were also asked to consider the draft Minutes of the meeting held on 5th March 2020.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 6th February and 5th March 2020 be approved.

20046. **Public Participation:** Members were reminded that the policy in respect of public participation at full Council meetings was adopted at the meeting to the Town Council in June 2019. This policy includes the following matters:

- 1) A period of 20 minutes public participation be allowed at the beginning of each Full Council meeting following consideration of the statutory items;
- 2) That each individual be permitted to address the Council for no longer than three minutes;
- 3) Electors and Business Rates payers of the Parish of Morecambe Town Council only are permitted to make representations regarding items on the agenda, although other issues can be raised if written notice of the question / matter are submitted to the Clerk 10 working days prior to the meeting.

There was no public discussion at this meeting.

20047. **Action Plan / Record of Decisions:** The Town Clerk presented an action plan / record of decisions that had been taken to date during the period of the lockdown due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

Members were reminded that it had been resolved that a specific scheme of delegation be established for the duration of the lockdown so that operational activities, the award from the established Community Resilience Fund and any urgent decisions could be made, recorded and subsequently reported to full Council for scrutiny. This decision making be delegated to the Chair and Vice Chair of the Town Council and Cllrs Anderton, Evans and Jenkins.

All activities, actions and decisions set out had been previously reported to Members at informal weekly remote meetings since the lockdown came into operation. After some comments and questions, it was **RESOLVED** that the Action Plan / Record of decisions be accepted.

20048. **Internal Audit Report:** Cllr Evans, Chair of Finance and Governance Committee and the Town Clerk presented the Internal Audit Report (Interim) that had been received from the recently appointed internal auditors, Internal Audit Yorkshire and circulated. It was explained that internal audit is an ongoing function, undertaken regularly throughout the financial year to test the continuing existence and adequacy of the Council's internal controls and governance. This work will result in an annual assurance report to Members designed to improve effectiveness and efficiency of the activities and operating procedures under the Council's control.
- The audit report states that internal control is the responsibility of the Council as a whole and that internal audit *'does not involve the detailed inspection of all records and transactions of an authority in order to detect error or fraud'*, as specified in the *Governance and Accountability for Small Authorities in England Practitioners Guide 2019*.
- The report sets out that *'Internal auditing is an independent, objective assurance activity designed to improve an organisations operation. It helps an organisation accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management control and governance processes. The purpose of the internal audit is to review and report to the authority on whether its systems of financial and other internal controls over its activities and operating procedures are effective'*

The programme of work carried out throughout the year is designed to *'afford reasonable assurance that the council's financial systems are robust and are operating in an effective manner and in compliance with the statutory legal framework'*.

The interim report sets out 34 recommendations covering a range of areas of financial control and management. An action plan to assign responsibility and timescale for implementation of these recommendations was appended to the interim report.

Members were informed that the interim report will be followed up by a second report covering the financial year end requirements and the completion of the *Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)*. After that a *'Governance Health Check'* covering twelve areas of governance will be undertaken with Member involvement. Recommendations arising from this work - together with the ones now presented - will provide the Council with a comprehensive framework to make improvements to arrangements for internal control, financial management, monitoring and reporting, ethical standards and governance.

Members asked questions on the audit process and it was then **RESOLVED** that the Internal Audit Report and planned audit process be noted and that plans to implement the recommendations set out in the report be referred to the Finance and Governance Committee and progress reported regularly to full Council.

20049. **Environmental Committee:** Cllr Matthews, Chair of Environmental Committee presented the draft Minutes of the meeting held on 16th March 2020. It was noted that it had been resolved that a small group of Members of the committee determine an approach for the future application and allocation of the Ward Grants set out in the approved Council budget. Unfortunately, as the country was put into lockdown due to the coronavirus pandemic just a few days late it has not been possible to progress this.

The committee considered an updated on the allotments where Members had attended positive meetings of the Allotments Committee and had supported their planning application for the erection of a community building on the land which, when completed, will be a real asset to the residents of Heysham North. Matters around the lease agreement are being investigated.

Members also discussed the work of the Environmental Enforcement officer and considered how this will be effectively monitored and managed by the committee going forward.

The arrangements for the 2020 Morecambe in Bloom competition was also briefly discussed, although it was recognised that this would be very much dependent on the any restrictions arising from the coronavirus pandemic.

Members thanked the committee for their work to date, whilst acknowledging that progress had been curtailed by the subsequent lockdown. Following questions and comments on weed management, grass cutting and street cleansing going forward, it was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

20050. **Payment's List:** Members considered the *payments list* to 30th April 2020, which included payments for consultancy on the neighbourhood plan, annual subscription to the National Association of Local Councils and professional audit and legal services. Total payments reported amounted to £17, 641.63. Following a question on the provision of legal services, it was **RESOLVED** that payments as set out be approved and authorised.

20051. **Social Media:** As requested the Town Clerk had drafted a Social Media and Electronic Communication Policy for Members consideration. The policy acknowledges that social media can play a significant part in effective communication to, and from, the local community but can also result in reputational damage if not managed well. The purpose of the policy is to provide guidelines for interacting positively on social media and on the Council's website and how posts and comments will be moderated to preserve the reputation of the Council and to ensure that people are treated with respect and within the law and the Code of Conduct.

After some comments and questions, it was **RESOLVED** that the Social Media and Electronic Communication Policy be adopted.

20052. **Planning Applications, Temporary Road Closures and Planning Decisions:** Councillors Anderton, Boyd-Power, Goodwin, and Matthews were removed from the meeting having declared an interest as Members of Lancaster City Council's Planning Committee.

Councillor Cleet (Planning Committee Chair) spoke to each of the following planning applications in turn:

Application No:	Description & Site Address
20/00207/FUL	Erection of boundary fence – 13 Slyne Road, Morecambe LA4 6PB
20/00225/ADV	Advertisement application for the display of an internally illuminated wall mounted electronic advertisement screen – 130 Lancaster Road, Morecambe LA4 5QN
20/00230/VCN	Change of use of ground floor from property management and sales to mixed use sandwich shop & café – 10 Thornton Road, Morecambe LA4 5PB
20/00242/CU	Change of use of dwelling to self-contained bed flats – 44 Clarendon Road East, Morecambe LA4 4HT
20/00248/FUL	Re-rendering of front & side elevations; Installation of replacement windows & garage door; Installation of 1 rooflight; Removal of gate, gate post & wing wall and replace gate – Lord Street, Morecambe LA4 5HX
20/00337/FUL	Erection of a single storey side & rear extension – 4 Warley Drive, Morecambe LA3 3AP
20/00340/FUL	Demolition of existing garage & erection of a single storey building – 4 Buckingham Place, Morecambe LA3 1BQ
20/00355/FUL	Erection of a first-floor side extension & a single storey front elevation – 5 Park Crescent, Morecambe LA4 6AU
20/00359/FUL	Installation of telecommunications equipment comprising of 3 antenna support poles accommodating 3 antennas & 6 remote radio units at 20m above ground level on southeast and southwest elevations – Alhambra Buildings, Yorkshire Street East, Morecambe
20/00387/FUL	Erection of a single storey extension within existing internal courtyard & alterations to windows & doors – Gleneagles Drive, Morecambe LA4 5BN
20/00415/FUL	Change of use of ground floor shop to a one bed residential flat – 2 Morecambe Street West, Morecambe LA4 5HE
20/00420/FUL	Demolition of existing conservatory & erection of a single storey rear extension – 3 Victoria Parade, Morecambe LA4 5NX
Tree Preservation Order: Morecambe View Livery Stables, Out Moss Lane, Morecambe	

It was noted that since there had been no meeting of the Town Council in April due to the coronavirus lockdown, planning application 20/00207/FUL had since been permitted and 20/00255/ADV refused by the planning authority, Lancaster City Council.

Having considered each of the remaining planning applications it was **RESOLVED** that they be supported in principle, with the exception of 20/00335/FUL where the Council wished to make a comment that the development should not have a negative impact on nearby residents ability to enjoy natural light and privacy.


20053. **Planning decisions:** Members considered the up-to-date position on decisions of the planning authority (Lancaster City Council) on planning applications previously considered by the Town Council. It was noted that four planning applications had been permitted and one was awaiting a decision. After some comments and discussion, it was **RESOLVED** that the up-to-date position on planning authority decisions on applications considered by the Town Council be noted.

20042. **Date of Next Meeting:** The date if the next meeting is Thursday 4th June 2020 at 7.00p.m.

The meeting ended at 8:20pm

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Chairman

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bob Bailey', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bob Bailey, Town Clerk