



MORECAMBE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of Morecambe Town Council on 4th June 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); Tony Anderson; Paul Anderton; Alex Ashworth; June Ashworth; Mariusz Balcer; Mirka Balcer John Bates; Vicky Boyd-Power; Roger Cleet; Trisha Clarke; Ian Clift; Glynis Dennison; Roger Dennison; Merv Evans; Jason Firth; Jake Goodwin; Patricia Heath; Debbie Jenkins; Cary Matthews; Jim Pilling; Margaret Pattison and David Whitaker

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

20055. **Apologies for Absence:** Apologies were received from Councillors Shirley Burns; Jack Newton and Paula Ross-Clasper

20056. **Declarations of Interests:** Town Councillors who serve on Lancaster City Council's planning committee declared an interest in agenda item 20069. As an elected County Councillor, Cllr Pattison requested, and was granted, dispensation on any discussions relating to Lancashire County Council.

20057. **Chairman's Urgent Business:** Members were asked to consider the following matters:

1) **Coronavirus Update:** Councillors Evans and Councillors Pattison provided an update on the latest position in the Lancaster District and Lancashire on the coronavirus pandemic and the actions and activities of Lancaster City Council and Lancashire County Council. The Town Clerk reported on the latest information from the Lancashire Resilience Forum.

Members noted that plans are now in place and being made for the 'transition' and 'recovery' stages as lockdown restrictions begin to ease. It was also recognised that as Lancashire as one of the highest recorded rates in the Country there is no room for complacency.

2) **Community Resilience Fund:** The Town Clerk reported that, to date, there have been five successful applications for the Community Resilience Fund covering a range of activities that are helping our local communities during these challenging times. It was reported that £11,932 had so far been awarded.

Feedback on what these funds are helping to achieve has been very good and a report on the outcomes and value of this funding will be reported later in the year.

- 3) **Town Clerk's Probationary Period:** Members agreed to defer this agenda item until the end of the meeting in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972 that the press and public be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that it could involve the possible disclosure of personal and private information about individuals and therefore exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A of that Act.

It was then **RESOLVED** that the Chairman's urgent business and updates be noted.

20058. **Minutes:** It was **RESOLVED** unanimously that the Minutes of the meeting held on the 7th May 2020 be approved.

20059. **Correspondence:** In line with his stated responsibilities, the Town Clerk presented the schedule of correspondence received and previously circulated to Members. It was reported that appropriate action had, or will be, taken by the Town Clerk and/or Committees to address any matters arising from correspondence received, including a draft proposal received from Morecambe BID for the 'Morecambe Sparkles' project to be considered by the Finance & Governance Committee.

After some comments and questions, it was **RESOLVED** that the schedule of correspondence received, and actions taken and planned be noted.

20060. **Public Participation:** There were no representations from members of the public.

20061. **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.

All activities, actions and decisions set out had been previously reported to Members at informal weekly remote meetings since the lockdown came into operation.

Members were reminded that many of the actions taken were directly in accordance with the Coronavirus Act 2020, including establishing a scheme of delegation during lockdown and the decision to cancel the Annual Town Meeting until 2021 and defer the Annual meeting of the Town Council at a date to be determined. Other actions taken, reported and scrutinised relate to operational and statutory matters relating to Council business.

After some comments and questions, it was **RESOLVED** that the Action Plan / Record of decisions be noted and accepted and that the Annual meeting of the Town Council and election of Chair and Vice-Chair be deferred until the end of September.

20062. **Information Management:** The Town Clerk presented a draft *Information Management and Data Protection Policy; Privacy Notice and Publication Scheme* for consideration and adoption. The documents set out how the Council aims to provide robust information management arrangements, including all aspects of information risk and security in line with specific legal responsibilities for personal and sensitive information under data protection legislation, and, transparency in accordance with the Transparency Code of Practice and the Freedom of Information Act.

After some comments and questions, it was **RESOLVED** that these documents be considered in more detail by the Finance & Governance Committee and recommendations made to Full Council.

20063. **Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR):** The Town Clerk presented a paper and guidance setting out the revised dates and actions arising from the Coronavirus pandemic in order to complete the annual review of the Town Councils governance arrangements and to publish an annual statement and accounts known as the *Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)*.

It was reported that as a direct result of Covid19 the deadline for the AGAR to be approved and published is now 31st August 2020.

The draft AGAR and supporting accounts and documents had been passed to the Internal Auditor for review, subject to which, it was recommended by the Finance & Governance Committee that the following deadlines be set:

1. Approval of the accounts and Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for 2019/20 be considered at the Town Council meeting on 2nd July 2020;
2. Subject to Town Council approval the statutory inspection period of the AGAR, accounts and supporting documentation be from Monday 6th July to Friday 14th August 2020 (30 working days);

The Town Clerk also took Members through the *Step-by-Step Guide* setting out the detailed actions and deadlines that have to be met, including publication of the AGAR before 1st September 2020 and publication of the *Notice of the conclusion of the (external) audit* and the *external Auditor Report and Certificate* before 1st December 2020.

After some comments and questions, it was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted and that, subject to Internal Audit, the deadlines as recommended be approved.

20064. **Risk Assessment:** The Town Clerk presented an updated assessment of the risks facing the council, including risks associated with the Coronavirus pandemic. Members were reminded that an annual review of risks and arrangements to mitigate them is an essential internal control and a statutory requirement of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR). Members noted that the risk assessment includes a range of risks associated with the governance, accountability, reputation and business continuity of the Town Council as well as physical and health and safety related hazards. After some comments and questions, it was **RESOLVED** that the Risk Assessment and Log for 2020 be referred to the Finance & Governance Committee for detailed review.
20065. **Asset Register:** The Town Clerk presented a first draft of Town Council's *Fixed Assets and Long-Term Investments*. The Town Clerk reported that this was based entirely on the 2018 / 2019 asset register and had not been subject to a detailed review in 2019 / 2020. It was reported that full details of the Council's assets are now recorded within the Scribe accounting system, presenting a permanent record of the assets description; date acquired; purchase and current values and location. There is also an opportunity to include, if considered necessary, the estimated life and usage / capacity of each asset. The Town Clerk reported that there had not been capacity in 2019 / 2020 to undertake a full review of the Council's assets and acknowledged that the Town Clerk will need support to undertake this review during 2020 / 2021. After some discussion, and a question on when the playgrounds may be re-opened again, it was **RESOLVED** that Asset Register now presented be noted; that the Town Council accepts that there had not been capacity in 2019 / 2020 to undertake a full review of its assets and that arrangements will be made in 2020 / 2021 to address this.
20066. **Festival & Events Committee:** The Chair of this sub-committee, Councillor Pattison presented the notes of the meeting held on 19th May, setting out potential ideas of events and activities to promote the town in the remainder of the Municipal Year 2020/21 (subject to Government guidelines) and beyond.

It was reported that these suggestions are subject to more detailed consideration and costings, with recommendations to be made to the Finance & Governance Committee in due course.

After some comments, it was **RESOLVED** that the notes of the meeting of the Festival & Events Committee be noted.

20067. **Finance & Governance Committee:** Councillor Evans reported on the recommendations, actions and resolutions arising from the meeting of the Committee on presented the report of the Finance & Governance Committee held on 20th May 2020 including:

- 1) The Town Clerk produces an *Action Plan* aimed at implementing Internal Audit recommendations by 31st March 2021;
- 2) A clear proposal for the audit of the 2018 / 2019 accounts be determined by the Town Council and the work carried out following completion of the 2019 / 2020 accounting and audit requirements;
- 3) That, subject to Internal Audit, the Town Council be recommended to approve the proposed timetable for the approval of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) and statutory inspection period.

20068. **Payments Schedule:** The Town Clerk presented the payment schedule to 31st May 2020. It was reported that it had not been possible to issue the payment schedule with the Agenda and supporting papers as some payments (salary and PAYE) are due at the end of each month. In this case, this was after the statutory three working days' notice required for the monthly Town Council meeting and the Town Council had determined not to give the Finance and Governance Committee delegated authority to approve payments.

Members noted that payments to the end of May totalled £5,660 and it was then **RESOLVED** that the payments be approved.

20069. **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 Bates declared an interest in planning application 20/00478/FUL and did not take part in the discussion on this application.

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

Application No:	Description & Site Address
LCC/2020/0029/	Change of use of land to an extension to an existing waste management site / waste transfer station & skip business – Former Hanson’s PLC Site, Whitegate, White Lund Industrial Estate
20/0040/FUL	Installation of roller shutters to the front elevation – 7 West End Road, Morecambe LA4 4DJ
20/00466/VCN	Retrospective application for the temporary siting of a refrigeration unit – Maple Works, Northgate, White Lund Industrial Estate, Morecambe LA3 3AZ
20/00471/CU	Part retrospective application for the change of use of a dwelling house to a social care office – 135 Balmoral Road, Morecambe LA3 1HJ
20/00478/FUL	Erection of a four-storey building comprising 6 one-bedroom flats, 2 garages and storage areas – Proposed development site, Thornton Road, Morecambe
20/00487/FUL	Construction of a dormer extension to the rear extension – Flat 1, Wellington Terrace, Morecambe LA4 5LW
Temporary prohibition of through traffic: Back Westminster Road, Morecambe from 0910 on Tuesday 12 th May 2020 until 2389 on Saturday 16 th May 2020 or until completion	
Temporary prohibition of through traffic: Eidsforth Road, Morecambe from 0100 on Tuesday 12 th May 2020 until 17:00 on Friday 15 th May 2020 or until completion	

Having considered each of the remaining planning applications it was **RESOLVED** that they be supported in principle, with comments being made on applications 20/00466VCN and 20/00471/CU.

Councillor Cleet reported that since he had been elected to the planning committee of Lancaster City Council he would have to stand down as Chair of the Town Council’s Planning Committee. Councillor Cleet was thanked for his contribution and diligence on planning matters considered by the Town Council.

20070. **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 three planning applications had been permitted, two had been refused and seven were 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 2nd July 2020 at 7.00p.m.

Town Clerk's Probationary Period (deferred from earlier in the meeting): The Chair reported that an end of probationary period meeting had been held with the Town Clerk. It had been an opportunity to discuss his work and performance since his formal appointment last November and, subject to approval, set objectives.

The probationary panel considered that the Town Clerk had successfully completed his probationary period and recommended his permanent appointment.

It was then **RESOLVED** unanimously that the Town Clerk be appointed on a permanent contract based on 25 hours per week

The meeting ended at 8:50pm

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Chairman

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

Bob Bailey, Town Clerk