



Morecambe Town Council  
Morecambe Town Hall,  
Marine Road  
Morecambe  
Lancashire  
LA4 5AF

[www.morecambe.gov.uk](http://www.morecambe.gov.uk)



**Members of Morecambe Town Council:**

*Cllr C Cozler - Chairman*

*Cllr P Hart - Vice Chairman*

*Cllr C Ainscough, Cllr J Ainscough, Cllr D Blacow, Cllr D Bottoms, Cllr L Bradbury, Cllr T Clarke, Cllr B Cooper, Cllr F Cooper, Cllr R Dennison, Cllr W Dixon, Cllr K Gee, Cllr J Goodrich, Cllr J Hanson, Cllr C Kent, Cllr D Knight, Cllr G Knight, Cllr J Livermore, Cllr M Pattison, Cllr J Pilling, Cllr J Rogerson, Cllr J Slater, Cllr M Stenneken, Cllr R Walsh, Cllr D Whitaker.*

# MINUTES - 21 September 2023

Minutes of Morecambe Town Council's Full Council Meeting held at 7pm on the twenty-first day of September 2023 at Morecambe Town Hall, Marine Road, Morecambe, LA4 5AF.

**Record of Attendance:**

**Councillors:** Cllrs C Cozler (Chairman), J Ainscough, C Ainscough, J Goodrich, R Walsh, M Pattison, D Whitaker, D Bottoms, K Gee, R Dennison, G Knight, D Knight, J Slater, C Kent, L Bradbury, W Dixon, B Cooper, P Clarke, P Hart, M Stenneken, J Livermore, J Pilling, F Cooper.

**Officers:** Luke Trevaskis (Chief Officer).

**Press:** Beyond Radio.

**Public:** Nine members of the public.

Mr Luke Trevaskis, CiLCA, PSLCC.  
Chief Executive

### **Minute 2023/24-042 - Apologies**

Apologies for non attendance received from Cllrs D Blacow, B Cooper, and J Hanson.

### **Minute 2023/24-043 - Declarations of Interest**

Cllr M Pattison declared membership of Lancashire County Council.

Cllrs M Pattison, R Dennison, P Hart, J Hanson, J Livermore, C Cozler, D Whitaker, B Cooper, and M Bottoms declared membership of Lancaster City Council.

Cllr J Ainscough declared they were the portfolio holder for Environment Services at Lancaster City Council.

Cllr C Ainscough declared they were an employee of Lancashire County Council.

### **Minute 2023/24-044 - Minutes**

The minutes of the full council meeting held on 20 July 2023 were approved. Cllr P Hart raised concern that a motion at the last meeting did not follow due process and stressed the importance of upholding procedures. The PO advised that the motion could be regularised when the Council considers a final direction for the Community Action Fund.

### **Minute 2023/24-045 - Morecambe Visitor Information Centre**

The Council considered the existence of the Morecambe VIC a vital component of the tourism economy of Morecambe and members expressed its closure should not have taken place without a viable physical alternative solution.

Members discussed a recent campaign from Age UK which highlighted those demographics who are often offline and overlooked.

Members noted that Lancaster City Council should be working with Morecambe Town Council when issues such as these arise.

Lancaster City Council has recently received UKSPF funding for its new digital tourist information service.

The Council resolved to request a detailed explanation/presentation of what the new digital service would involve, and for anticipated delivery dates for Morecambe.

The PO agreed to write to the Leader and CE of Lancaster City Council to voice the Town Council's objection to the closure of in-person service.

### **Minute 2023/24-046 - Promenade Vandalism**

The Council condemned the recent homophobic, racist and fascist graffiti that has vandalised the Promenade, and resolved to write to authorities to be kept updated about any progress made to hold the culprit(s) to account. Members expressed how such actions can make the community feel very vulnerable, and the Council noted the importance of a strong Police presence during Remembrance Sunday in November. Members thanked the team at Lancaster City Council who have responded to each act of vandalism immediately.

### **Minute 2023/24-047 - Banking**

The Council resolved to add three additional signatories to the bank account - Cllrs G Knight, M Pattison, and J Livermore.

## **Minute 2023/24-048 - Land Parcels**

The Council noted the regular complaints received about the infrequent maintenance of some land parcels within Morecambe.

In September 2022, the Town Council wrote to Lancaster City Council to request that a number of small land assets totalling 0.31 hectares be transferred into community ownership.

The Town Council detailed it was keen to help stimulate improvements to the land parcels to enhance the social and environmental wellbeing of people living in Morecambe.

The Council explained to Lancaster City Council how it wished to involve residents to help co-design the parcels of land in a bid to kickstart community pride and create 'patches for people'.

The proposal was met with support from officers and members alike from both authorities and, until recently, it was understood the asset transfers were proceeding subject to finalisation of the agreement.

However, the Council noted an email had been received from the Chief Officer for Environment recently advising the City Council has reviewed its position and "the transferring of land isn't guaranteed to add value based on the proposals".

It was not clear why it took twelve months for the City Council to change its position, or why the Town Council was not given the opportunity to have further conversations with officers and/or members prior to this U-turn.

City Councillor J Ainscough, the portfolio holder for Environment Services at the City Council, advised that her decision was based on the fact there was no evidence of need, no evidence of a plan, and no evidence of existing delivery. Cllr Ainscough also indicated that the legal advice received from officers at Lancaster City Council suggested that there was concern that the transfer of land parcels could set a precedent and result in the City Council being left with little of its own assets over a course of time. Additional comments indicated that the Town Council could submit a more detailed proposal for a smaller quantity of land in the first instance for consideration. Cllr Ainscough also reiterated that Lancaster City Council is keen to work with Morecambe Town Council.

Members discussed how Lancaster City Council appeared unable to maintain land like it used to, and felt the proposed land transfers would improve the public realm whilst reducing the workload for, and costs of, the City Council.

Whilst it was noted that requests had been made by the City Council for a detailed plan from the Town Council, members discussed how apt it may also be for the Town Council to request a detailed plan from the City Council as to how they intend to improve the maintenance of their land in the future.

A Councillor also spoke of the principles of localism, and highlighted that the success of community ownership depends on the willingness of Principal Authorities to allow local communities to make their own decisions about matters which affect them the most. It was noted that a requirement for communities to jump through hoops to prove their 'worthiness' before a decision is made, does not reflect how localism is best achieved. Members agreed that a local community wanting to take ownership of its environment should be sufficient reason to trigger a community asset transfer, and Lancaster City Council should not be making U-turns after leaving a community proposal in limbo for over twelve months.

The Council noted it was still keen to pursue transforming small parcels of land for local communities, and it resolved to focus on two areas of land in the first instance (Maylands Square and Mardale Avenue), undertaking additional community consultation to develop a more detailed proposal and management plan which will be submitted to Lancaster City Council shortly.

Cllrs J Ainscough and C Ainscough withdrew from the meeting.

### **Minute 2023/24-049 - Exclusion of the Press and Public**

The Council resolved to exclude the press and public on the grounds that the items of business could involve the possible disclosure of exempt information.

The meeting was adjourned for a ten minute comfort break.

### **Minute 2023/24-050 - Festival Grant Application - Bay Film Festival**

The Council resolved to earmark a sum of £3,000.00 for the Bay Film Festival which would be paid to underwrite any audited losses (if they arise).

### **Minute 2023/24-051 - Festival Grant Application - Fringe Festival**

At its meeting held on 11 July 2023, the Council resolved to award a grant of £3,000.00 to the Morecambe Fringe Festival.

The Council received complaints regarding the showing of a film called "Oh Jeremy Corbyn: the big lie".

Criterion 3 (b) of the terms and conditions attached to the grant awarded by MTC confirms that funding cannot be used to support any activities that promote religious/political beliefs.

The Council confirmed its position in relation to the terms and conditions of the grant and agreed that the festival had not met the conditions of the grant.