



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 - 19 October 2023

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

**Record of Attendance:**

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

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

**Press:** None.

**Public:** One member of the public.

Mr Luke Trevaskis, CiLCA, PSLCC.  
Chief Executive

### **Minute 2023/24-052 - Apologies**

Apologies for non attendance received from Cllrs K Gee, C Cozler, J Hanson, J Livermore.

### **Minute 2023/24-053 - Declarations of Interest**

Cllr M Pattison declared membership of Lancashire County Council.

Cllrs M Pattison, R Dennison, P Hart, 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 and Cllr D Whitaker declared they were employees of Lancashire County Council.

Cllr C Ainscough declared a board membership of Morecambe Players CIC.

### **Minute 2023/24-054 - Minutes**

The minutes of the last full council meeting were approved.

### **Minute 2023/24-055 - Public Participation**

None.

### **Minute 2023/24-056 - IT Infrastructure**

Motion:

“Morecambe Town Council is currently struggling to get the basics right. The sheer amount of emails and paperwork that the Proper Officer and supporting staff have to deal with is not compatible with an efficient and modern town council. We do not have any internal supporting software to maintain the website and other social media channels efficiently, ensure exempt documents are kept secure and provide administrative support to staff preparing agendas, taking minutes etc. Other similar sized councils, such as Stroud Town Council <https://www.stroudtown.gov.uk/> are making use of digital tools to enable this work, working with software partners to achieve this.

This council recognises that if it is to embrace an ambitious agenda over the next administrative term and onwards, it needs to get the foundations correct and provide as much support to our administrative staff as possible and that it should form a small working group including any Councillors with a background in IT and administration support to explore how such software could benefit the Town Council and the costs involved. The results of this investigation will be brought to full Council as a paper before the date of the next budget Council.”

Proposer: Cllr Joanne Ainscough

Seconder: Cllr John Goodrich

Members discussed the importance of utilising efficient IT infrastructure.

Members expressed interest in the motion and noted the importance of officer involvement in any proposals which may be brought forward in the future.

Members noted that new officers were due to commence employment in the coming weeks, and they may too have good suggestions for improvements.

Members noted where possible the Council should 'shop local', and it was understood that some IT infrastructure that other councils use may be too cost prohibitive.

Some members expressed a desire for the Council to go paperless.

Cllr J Ainscough clarified the motion was an intended collaboration with officers.

Following a vote, the Council did not support the formation of a working group, but generally agreed IT improvements may be required and anticipate officers will bring ideas forward in due course.

### **Minute 2023/24-057 - Baylight Partnership**

At its meeting held on 4 November 2021, Morecambe Town Council approved (in principle) an annual contribution to the Baylight / Morecambe Sparkle event of £20,000 per annum for four years from 2022 to 2025.

Whilst money had been set aside in the budget to cover this expenditure, it was required for members to approve the invoice of £20,000.00 and agree what role the Council wished to play in the 2024 display.

Members expressed praise for the success of the 2023 event and the crowds that it attracted.

Members showed a keen interest in seeing more illuminations towards the West End of Morecambe.

A councillor noted that there was considerable community engagement underway.

The Council agreed that Cllr C Kent should be appointed as Morecambe Town Council's representative on the Morecambe Sparkle CIC Board.

The Council agreed Morecambe Town Council's stakeholder contribution of £20,000.

### **Minute 2023/24-058 - Tourism Information Service**

Motion:

"We propose that Morecambe Town Council convenes a meeting of the Tourist Information Service Working Group as soon as possible as approved at its meeting held on 23 February 2023. The group being tasked with exploring the feasibility of Morecambe Town Council undertaking the operation of a Tourist Information Service for Morecambe, following the announcement that Lancaster City Council is unable to fund the service beyond October 2023."

Proposed: Cllr Jim Pilling

Seconded: Cllr Paul Hart

A member expressed an interest in approaching Lancaster City Council to coordinate the cross-authority approach, to maintain collaboration between stakeholders.

Cllr Geoff Knight proposed an addition to the motion (below) which was accepted as a friendly amendment.

"This council requests that Lancaster City Council provide us with an update on how they intend to apportion the UKSPF grant and whether they would be willing to provide Morecambe Town Council with funding from this grant to enable us to provide a physical tourism presence in the resort".

Members noted that enquiries to Lancaster City Council's website is not providing quick responses.

Members felt the additional officers that Morecambe Town Council had appointed could help facilitate further discussions about the Tourism Information offer in Morecambe.

Members agreed that Morecambe Town Council had the capacity to facilitate an ongoing service in some capacity, and that Lancaster City Council should be asked to support and help fund.

The Council approved the motion.

### **Minute 2023/24-059 - Local Government Association Peer Review**

In March 2023, the Town Council welcomed the Local Government Association and the National Association of Local Councils to undertake a Corporate Peer Challenge.

The purpose of this scheme is to provide benefit to local authorities, offering guidance, mentorship, and advisory reports to support councils as they develop.

Whilst high tier authorities are regularly offered such opportunities, at the time Morecambe Town Council was only the fourth parish and town council to be offered the opportunity nationally.

The report from the review was recently published and the Council noted that it is required to respond to the feedback ahead of an update visit which is scheduled to take place in February 2024.

The Corporate Peer Challenge delivered by the LGA is an important milestone in Morecambe Town Council's improvement journey. The report is a testament to the hard work of staff and the continued efforts of members to improve Morecambe and the services the Council provides to the town and residents.

There is recognition that whilst progress has been made, the Council is at the start of its journey with its new administration and there is much to do in coming years. For instance, the Community Action Plan needs to be revisited to become more strategic and the Council is in a position to look to capitalise on new opportunities as they arise. This is timely, as the Council also must set a new budget in the new year, and a revised strategic plan will help to inform the Council's financial position over the next three years.

Some of the highlights of the report by the LGA include:

- "The peer team witnessed a commitment to continuous improvement at MTC and were impressed by the developments that have been put in place over the last two years. As stated by an interviewee (external stakeholder), "there is hope, optimism and a sense of looking forward".
- "Commitment to developing income generating opportunities is also evident; with a programme of events and the initiation of a district-wide weeding service commissioned by Lancashire County Council, providing additional revenue for the council.
- "This is an ambitious town council with a desire to make a fundamental and long-lasting change to Morecambe. This is illustrated through the drive and progress that has been made by MTC over the last 2 years by both members and officers, demonstrated for example through improvements to governance arrangements, expansion of public realm work, enhanced engagement with the community and delivery of a successful programme of events.
- The peer team saw commitment to Morecambe from MTC members, staff and key stakeholders, including Lancaster City Council, Morecambe Business Improvement District (BID), Eden Project Morecambe and Marketing Lancashire, matched with a strong vision for Morecambe and visible leadership from the chief executive officer and chair. This has contributed to a sense of optimism for the town from the range of stakeholders that we spoke to."

The Council agreed to publish an initial response to the key recommendations outlined in the report (as below).

***Proposed High-Level Response to the LGA's Peer Challenge Review:***

*The Council would like to thank the Local Government Association, the National Association of Local Councils and peers from Frome Town Council and Falmouth Town Council.*

*The Council has considered the report and is encouraged by the positive feedback.*

*The Council acknowledges the areas of focus as highlighted within the recommendations and sets out its high-level plan to address these below.*

***Place Shaping***

*The Council agrees that it should be undertaking a key role in place-shaping for Morecambe.*

*Since the LGA's visit, a new Planning and Regeneration Committee has been formed, the primary responsibility of which is to play a significant role in place leadership, working with other agencies to oversee the Council's input into matters concerning the planning and regeneration of Morecambe, including projects earmarked for key sites such as Frontierland.*

***Mission Statement***

*The Council will be considering a new corporate mission statement when it revises its strategic action plan, underpinned by shared outcomes and aligned to its longer-term aims and objectives.*

***Staffing***

*The Council has already undertaken a full staffing review since the LGA's visit. Interviews have taken place for positions and new officers are due to commence employment in the coming weeks.*

*It is anticipated that the new staffing team will better meet the current and future ambitions of the Council, to ensure the authority can deliver against its strategic plan.*

***Partnerships***

*The Council acknowledges the benefits of becoming further embedded in local partnerships and community groups, to influence the delivery of shared outcomes. The Town Council has the capacity to adopt a role as a facilitative council, working to champion the local voice to influence the delivery of shared outcomes through other authorities such as Lancaster City Council and Lancashire County Council.*

***Communications Strategy***

*A PR and Marketing Officer will commence employment in the coming weeks and they will be tasked with developing a communications strategy that increases and enhances the reach of internal and external communications. This will include a review of the website and help to ensure information about the Council is updated more frequently for residents, visitors, and stakeholders alike.*

***Civility and Governance***

*As noted by the LGA, the Council became the first parish and town council in Lancashire to achieve Quality Gold accreditation through NALC's Local Council Award Scheme. This scheme*

*assess standards in transparency, responsible governance, and exceptional community impact, with Quality Gold illustrating that the Council is not only meeting basic requirements, but is also demonstrating good practice in a range of areas.*

*The Council has undertaken significant work in recent years to address issues identified in historic audits, and it has improved governance - this is evidenced through the 2021-2022 internal and external audit reports that provide assurance that the Council now has a sound system of internal control.*

*The Council will continue to focus on its governance and procedures, with the new Finance and Governance Committee tasked with providing periodic reports and recommendations back to the Council.*

### **Branding & Information**

*The Council acknowledges that it can sometimes be confusing for residents to know which of the three tiers of local government they should contact in relation to which service. The Council hopes this will be clarified as it defines its communications strategy and promotes the activities within its remit.*

*The Council is considering how it can develop its street-level branding for residents to access information. Some discussions have taken place regarding the Principal Authority's decision to close the Visitor Information Centre, and dialogue is ongoing to ascertain the feasibility of the Town Council supporting a similar service in the future.*

*Conversations have also been had regarding the Council's noticeboards throughout the town. The current noticeboards that have fallen into disrepair are being removed and the Environment Committee is currently exploring options to ensure that information can continue to be easily accessible by a wider demographic who may not have access to the Internet.*

*It is a key responsibility of the newly formed Planning and Regeneration Committee to play a significant role in any rebrand of Morecambe that will provide a clearer tourism offer.*

### **Consultations**

*The Council has noted that it has undertaken some good online consultation to date, and accepts that more targeted offline approaches to consulting with communities should be considered in the future. It is hoped this will help to engage with hard-to-reach communities in ways that local residents can easily access and understand.*

*It is a key responsibility of the newly formed Planning and Regeneration Committee to hold regular meetings and consultations with the community, and engage with local stakeholders and authorities, to establish a vision for Morecambe's future.*

### **Income**

*The Council will be employing a prudent approach when considering additional income generating opportunities - including applying for additional grant funding for projects and schemes. One of the key roles of the new Finance Officer will be to advise the Council on potential funding opportunities and any financial risks with undertaking service delivery. A key role of the Events Officer will also be to ensure the Council's annual events programme delivers a return to help subsidise costs.*

### **Minute 2023/24-060 - Finance**

Members noted that the Council has a statutory deadline to set its 2024-2025 precept before 1 March 2024. Lancaster City Council would prefer the Town Council's budget to be set by the end of January for administrative purposes.

In line with the Council's Financial Regulations, each committee must submit its budget bid by the end of November 2023.

The Finance and Governance Committee will meet December-January to review budgets with the RFO.

A final budget will be presented to the Council for consideration at its meeting to be held on 18 January 2024.

Members noted that the Staffing budget will see a significant underspend in this financial year as vacancies will not have been filled until Month 8 onwards. Members accepted additional costs will be coded to this budget line as the Town Council currently does not own its own office furniture (and it has been requested that loaned equipment be returned to Lancaster City Council in the near future). New furniture and equipment will be purchased for the new recruits by the PO before the next meeting (including desks, chairs, cupboards, computers, and telephones etc).

The Council accepted the financial update from the Proper Officer regarding the quarter statements, noting that more regular budget updates, account summaries, and bank reconciliations will be able to be provided when a Finance Officer is in post next month.

### **Minute 2023/24-061 - Personnel Committee Terms of Reference**

At a recent Personnel Committee meeting, members noted that there was a historic iteration of the Terms of Reference approved by the Council at its annual meeting.

The Personnel Committee recommended to full council the approval of the updated TORs (as originally agreed by the full Council at its meeting held on 3 November 2022).

The Council approved the updated Terms of Reference for the Personnel Committee.

### **Minute 2023/24-062 - 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.

### **Minute 2023/24-063 - Festival Grant Application - More Music (West End Winter Lantern)**

The Council resolved to award a grant of £3,000.00 to More Music for the West End Winter Lantern Festival.

### **Minute 2023/24-064 - Grant Application - Stanleys**

The Council resolved to award a grant of £9,957.50 to Stanleys Community Centre.