



Morecambe Town Council

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Proper Officer: Mr Luke Trevaskis

Members of Morecambe Town Council

Cllr C Cozler - Chairman

Cllr P Hart - Vice Chairman

Cllr C Ainscough, Cllr J Ainscough, Cllr Dan Blacow, Cllr David Bottoms, Cllr L Bradbury, Cllr P 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 - 15 February 2024

Minutes of Morecambe Town Council's Full Council Meeting held at 7pm on the fifteenth day of February 2024 at Morecambe Town Hall, Marine Road, Morecambe, LA4 5AF.

Record of Attendance:

Councillors: C Cozler (Chairman), C Ainscough, J Ainscough, D Bottoms, P Clark, B Cooper, R Dennison, W Dixon, J Goodrich, J Hanson, P Hart, C Kent, J Livermore, J Pilling, J Slater, M Stenneken, R Walsh, D Whitaker

Officers: Luke Trevaskis, Peter Fisher, Joel Beal

Press: Beyond Radio

Public: None in attendance

Mr Luke Trevaskis, CiLCA, PSLCC. Chief Executive

Minute 2023/24 - 082 - Apologies

Apologies for non-attendance received from Cllrs M Pattison, K Gee, D Blacow, J Rogerson, L Bradbury, G Knight, D Knight, F Cooper.

Minute 2023/24 - 083 - Declarations of Interest

Cllrs R Dennison, P Hart, M Pattison, M Bottoms, J Livermore, J Ainscough declared an interest as a Councillor of Lancaster City Council.

Cllrs B Cooper, Dennison and Cozler declared they were members of Lancaster City Council planning committee.

Cllr P Hart and M Bottoms declared they were substitute members of the Lancaster City Council planning committee.

Cllr C Ainscough and D Whittaker declared they are employees of Lancashire County Council.

Minute 2023/24 - 084 - Minutes

The minutes of the last full council meeting were approved.

Minute 2023/24 - 085 - Public participation

None.

Minute 2023/24 - 086 - Policies

Cllr Cooper gave a brief explanation of policies relating to Finance and Governance - Income and Debt Management Policy, and Investment Strategy. Cllr Cooper proposed that both policies be approved as per drafted, members voted to approve both.

Minute 2023/24 - 087 - Standing Orders

The Council approved the below amend to Standing Orders.

Section 8 (J) - Proper Officer Duties

To process all requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Data Protection Act 1998. With any requests for an internal review to be processed by a second officer.

Section 24 - Freedom of Information Act / Data Protection Act / Environmental Information Regulations

- a) all requests for information held by the Council shall be processed
- b) All requests for information will be processed in line with the Council's Data Protection Policy and any investigations opened by the Information Commissioner shall be reported to members. If Decision Notices are served by the ICO due to an expiration of time, officers should ensure any outstanding responses are provided within the extension of time provided.
- c) The Proper Officer and Finance Officer shall take all legal steps to comply with legislation.

Minute 2023/24 - 088 - Finance and Governance Committee Terms of Reference

The Council approved to adopt additional areas of responsibility to the Terms of Reference of the Finance and Governance Committee as below:

- I) *to review the Council's reserves no less than annually providing any recommendations for optimal interest*
- II) *to monitor and review any Council investments, including receipt of quarterly treasury reports on treasury activity*
- III) *to consider any recommendations identified by the Council's internal and/or external auditor*
- IV) *to receive quarterly reports demonstrating reconciliation of the Council's bank account(s)*
- V) *to receive quarterly reports demonstrating reconciliation of the Council's petty cash account(s)*
- VI) *to receive quarterly reports demonstrating reconciliation of the Council's bank card(s)*
- VII) *to consider and review the Council's provision of bad debts, approving any write-offs if greater than a value of £500.00 and refer to Full Council if greater than a value of £5000.00*
- VIII) *to review from time to time the adequacy of the Council's insurance cover, and receive at least once a year a report regarding claims settled and lodged since the last report.*
- IX) *to consider periodically reports regarding the Council's compliance with its regulatory requirements (e.g. health and safety, data protection etc.,)*

Minute 2023/24 - 089 - Finance

- I) **Asset register:** A number of items have been removed from the main body of the asset register as the Council no longer maintains responsibility for certain items that were originally donated by Morecambe Town Council. The Council resolved to approve the updated asset register. All purchases over £100 since 01/04/2023 have been added to the register.
- II) **AGAR 2022-2023:** Chief Officer gave an explanation of AGAR numerical transcription error. The Council noted the error, accepted the amend and approved Chairman to sign the original document. *"To note that a transcription error has been identified on the AGAR (Section 2) submitted by the Council for its 2022-2023 audit. Each annual AGAR requires that the prior year's figures be submitted alongside the current year, and rather than transcribing the 2021-2022 asset register figure, the 2020-2021 asset register figure was included in error. It should be noted that the correct asset register figure for 2021-2022 was submitted at the time of that audit, and the correct asset register figure for 2022-2023 was submitted at the time of that audit. The Council will need to note the transcription error and approve the Chairperson to amend and sign its AGAR to reflect the actual asset register figure for 2021-2022 of £111,956.00".*
- III) **Budget and Precept 2024-2025:** The Council noted the discussions that took place during the meeting held on 18 January 2024, and noted that the carry forward balance has since been amended to reflect an additional payment. The new anticipated carry forward balance stands at £123.30 as opposed to £195.70. The Council ratified the decisions made at the meeting held on 18 January 2024 accepting the budget for 2024-2025 be set at £1,164,680.00 and the precept be set at £951,384.33.
- IV) **Financial Regulations:** The Council resolved the following amendments to financial regulations, following officer recommendation, to reflect current practice. Section 6.2

Following authorisation under Financial Regulation 5, the Council, a duly delegated committee or, if so delegated, the Proper Officer of RFO shall give instruction that a payment shall be made. The RFO and Finance Officer shall have delegated authority to process payments in respect of all authorised items of expenditure as far as is practicable and usually within 30-60 days. This process will require one officer to set up (submit) the payments, and the other officer to release (authorise), at all times ensuring there is a two-step process. Periodically, two members shall undertake an audit to sample test payments, checking invoices for numerical accuracy, correct bank account details, and cross referencing the payment authorisation process. The outcome of such sample tests will be presented periodically to the Finance and Governance Committee.

2023/24 - 090 - Planning Application (land off Powderhouse Lane)

Members were asked to consider the proposed response to the outline planning application for the construction of up to 200 homes and associated infrastructure on Powderhouse Lane. The Council resolved to submit the objection as drafted.

Minute 2023/24 - 091 - Exclusion of Press and Public

The Council resolved to exclude the press and public.

Minute 2023/24 - 092 - Response to FOI request

Cllr Cooper raised concern over the cost to the tax payer of the number of FOI challenges received by Morecambe Town Council. The Chair of the Finance and Governance committee stated that he would be happy to receive the challenge documentation relating to the 2022-2023 audit and to support Officers in drafting responses. The Council considered the request for an internal review of a recent FOI request and agreed its response.

Minute 2023/24 - 093 - Community Grant Application 2023/24 - 008

Members asked to consider the application from SAFE (deferred from last meeting subject to additional information being submitted). SAFE is a well-established organisation which offers a selection of groups focused on the wellbeing of the people of Lancaster. The community grant will enable the work of the (weekly) Socialise Morecambe Group and, (monthly) Morecambe Young Adults to continue for a further 12 months, enhancing the wellbeing support available to the residents of Morecambe.

The Council resolved to approve a grant of £4930.00

Minute 2023/24 - 094 - LGBT Out in the Bay

At its meeting on 07.07.2022 (minute 20426), the Council approved for a grant of £7000.00 to be awarded to LGBT Out in the Bay for Morecambe Pride. The Council approved a further £3000.00 to be held against audited losses. To date, no audited losses have been supplied to the Council and the additional £3000.00 has not been paid.

The Council was asked to consider if it wished for any further action be taken in relation to this sum. The Council agreed that the applicant will be written to and advised they have until 31 March 2024 to return evidence of audited losses. In the event that audited losses are not received then the applicant must note there will no further opportunity beyond 31 March 2024 to access this sum.