



Morecambe Town Council

Morecambe Town Hall,
Marine Road
Morecambe
Lancashire
LA4 5AF

www.morecambe.gov.uk
clerk@morecambe.gov.uk

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 - 21 March 2024

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

Record of Attendance:

Councillors: C Cozler (Chairman), C Ainscough, J Ainscough, D Blacow, D Bottoms, L Bradbury, P Clarke, B Cooper, F Cooper, R Dennison, W Dixon, J Goodrich, J Hanson, P Hart, D Knight, G Knight, J Livermore, M Pattison, J Rogerson, J Slater, M Stenneken, R Walsh

Officers: Luke Trevaskis, Peter Fisher, Joel Beal, Helen Freeborough

Press: None in attendance

Public: 30

Minute 2023/24 - 095 - Apologies

Apologies for non-attendance received from Cllrs K Gee, C Kent, J Pilling, D Whitaker.

Minute 2023/24 - 096 - 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.

Cllr J Ainscough declared an interest as a Portfolio Holder for Environment Services of Lancaster City Council.

Cllrs R Dennison and C Cozler declared they were members of Lancaster City Council planning committee.

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

Minute 2023/24 - 097 - Minutes

The minutes of the last full council meeting were approved.

Minute 2023/24 - 098 - Public participation

To receive representations from electors that have requested to speak by 10am regarding a matter on the agenda. ([Morecambe Town Council Standing Orders - Sections 1d-1l](#)).

The PO clarified for the members of the public attending, that in order to address the Council at a Full Council meeting, the person wishing to speak must be either on the electoral roll for Morecambe, **or** paying business rates on a property within the Town Council's administrative boundary.

The PO reminded residents that one of the priorities of the Council is to listen to local residents, and all residents are welcome to arrange an individual appointment with officers to discuss any concerns and view the Council's accounts.

I) A former chairperson addressed the meeting:

As the former Chairperson of Morecambe Town Council for three years, the resident wished to clarify her position on the direction that had been taken by the previous administration with regard to Frontierland. She stated that she wholeheartedly supported the decision of the previous administration to safeguard Frontierland for community use and commented that she was heartened to see the consultation carried out by Lancaster City Council mirrored that of Morecambe Town Council. She stated that she hoped the collective voice of the community will be enough to safeguard and steer any future development in a direction that accords with both consultations. She went on to praise the work that has been done to transition Morecambe Town Council from an authority mired in conflict and poor governance, to a Council that was the first in the County to be awarded Quality Gold Accreditation. She expressed understanding of the difficulties faced by current members, and the challenges of balancing current ongoing costs, with the requirements for adequate reserves and future-proofing. She commented on the growth of the Council delivering benefits for the community, including streets that are weed free, events and festivals that have additional funding, and grants available for community groups. She closed by saying that if everybody worked together we could ensure that we are all benefitting and strengthening our community for future growth.

(II) Cllr Roger Cleet, Lancaster City Council addressed the meeting:

(The correct procedures to address the meeting had not been followed by Lancaster City Councillor Roger Cleet as he had not submitted the content of his representations prior to the meeting. Cllr Roger Cleet advised he was unable to provide a copy of his representations prior to the meeting as he was unable to see the content of the document on the agenda for which he wished to speak to (the Council's response to Simon Hoare MP). The PO advised Cllr Roger Cleet that if he wished to speak to a matter on the agenda, it would be assumed he was aware of what he wished to say. Following a vote,

the Council provided an exemption to permit Cllr Roger Cleet to speak.

Cllr Cozler reminded Cllr Roger Cleet that time allocated per person to speak is limited to three minutes. Cllr Roger Cleet refused to draw comments to a close when requested.)

Cllr Roger Cleet introduced himself and clarified his attendance at the meeting was as a Lancaster City Councillor.

Cllr Roger Cleet his feelings with regard to the Frontierland Tax that was collected during 2023, and asked the Council why this has not been refunded to local residents who pay council tax.

Cllr Roger Cleet stated that at the first Full Council meeting after the election, a decision was made by the new administration that they would not continue with the previous administration's view to develop the Frontierland site. Cllr Roger Cleet further continued that Morecambe Town Council has used £150,000 of the Frontierland Community Action Fund to subsidise the precept for 2024/25. He further commented that Morecambe Town Council has not published its Internal Audit for 2022/2023.

Cllr Roger Cleet then outlined details of previous FOI requests that he has made to Morecambe Town Council, before asking for a new FOI as follows:

"I would like to ask tonight, a Freedom of Information request in front of Councillors and members of the public, for sight of documentation from either the Proper Officer, Full Council or Finance Committee, or any other committee, which proves that Morecambe Town Council sought actively to refund the Frontierland Community Action Fund in Full, whether this was legal advice from solicitors, Finance Officers at Lancaster City Council or from the National Association of Local Councils, of which Morecambe Town Council is a member.

He asked that this is acknowledged by email to his City Council email address."

Cllr B Cooper provided a response following the conclusion of Cllr Roger Cleet's representations. As Chairman of the Finance and Governance Committee, he explained that a series of meetings are going to be planned during the next few months to consider all matters. Cllr B Cooper confirmed that no Councillors serving on Morecambe Town Council receive any financial compensation from the Council for the work they undertake.

Minute 2023/24 - 099 - Planning and Regeneration Committee

Members were asked to consider requests from additional members of the Council to become Members of the Planning and Regeneration Committee.

Cllrs C Cozler and J Pilling, both asked to join the Planning and Regeneration Committee. The Council considered and approved the request, and both Councillors were duly elected onto the Committee.

Minute 2023/24 - 100 - Privacy Policy

The Council considered the Privacy Policy which was first adopted in 2020. The policy now requires updating to ensure legal compliance with GDPR and PECR, before amendments can be made to the Town Council website. These include amends to the integration of Google Analytics for web traffic monitoring and analysis, and an email signup for an MTC mailing list. Both are necessary to help understand the existing website and inform future website development. The website will be an additional communication channel, vital for improving the Council's ability to get its messages across and consult with residents and interested parties directly.

The Council considered and approved to adopt the new Privacy Policy.

Minute 2023/24 - 101 - Correspondence from Simon Hoare MP

Members considered the letter from Simon Hoare MP, Minister for Local Government, and agreed to submit the Council's response - noting that any reply will be made available to press and public once a copy has been submitted to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

Cllr M Pattison asked if a map showing the boundary of Morecambe Town Council be attached to the letter. This was accepted.

Cllr B Cooper publicly thanked MTC Officers for their hard work in drafting the response.

Cllr B Cooper then asked for a debate on weeding in the district. Cllr J Ainscough, Chairperson of the Environment Committee, spoke of the good work that the Town Rangers have done in removing weeds and deep cleaning parts of the town, and stated that the Town Rangers have made significant inroads to the problem of weeding. A public vote of thanks was made to the Town Rangers for the hard work they undertake.

The PO confirmed that when the Council first considered approaching Lancashire County Council to undertake weed control in the town, consideration had been given to requesting the County Council to produce a separate work parcel for Morecambe. However, it was noted that due to economies of scale the subsidy available from Lancashire County Council for just the Morecambe area would have been insufficient to fully cover all equipment costs, and the taxpayer of Morecambe would have had to shoulder the burden of purchasing equipment and resourcing staffing expenditure. The Council confirmed that owing to the County Council having faith in the Town Council to deliver a district-wide service, the Town Council was able to secure the funding (overall several years) required to purchase all equipment at no additional cost to the Morecambe taxpayer. It was clarified that all staffing costs for the time taken to undertake the weed control work is covered by the County Council and that the taxpayer of Morecambe was not subsidising any costs for work undertaken outside of the administrative boundary. It was further noted that prior to Morecambe Town Council taking over the delivery of the weed control service in 2023, some areas of the town had not been weeded for over 3 years. Since MTC's service delivery has commenced, weed growth has significantly reduced, complaints have dramatically decreased across the three tiers of local government (County Council, City Council, and Town Council), and positive feedback has been received from local councillors, residents and parish councils.

Minute 2023/24 - 102 - Local Government Association / National Association of Local Councils - Peer Review

The Council considered the Peer Review Monitoring Report produced by the LGA and NALC.

It was noted that the peer review team were pleased with the progress and direction of Morecambe Town Council, and key recommendations were received to support future growth.

Members accepted the report and noted it will be published on the website.

Minute 2023/24 - 103 - Government Inquiry into High Streets in Towns

Cllr B Cooper commented that one of the problems faced by businesses on a High Street is the rent charged by landlords. Cllr J Slater explained how rent control might work on a High Street, whilst acknowledging that there are other tools that exist to help with rent control.

Cllr P Clarke noted that within Morecambe there are residential properties to rent above empty commercial units. It was noted that there is a high proportion of absentee landlords. Cllr Clarke asked if there was anything that could be done to make the landlord of an empty commercial unit keep the unit in good order. Cllr Slater commented that derelict shop units probably receive either Council Tax relief or Small Business Rates relief. Cllr P Hart asked whether there is a fund available that can be used to decorate properties that have been left derelict.

Cllr M Pattison asked if there is any action that Morecambe Town Council can be take to stop residential landlords serving notice on their tenants in order to sell the property.

Cllr J Ainscough commented that we are facing a housing crisis in the district and there is not enough housing for people in this area, and commented on the former Co-op building (Centenary House) situated on Regent Road (West End). This has been derelict since the mid-1990's but is now owned by Lancaster City Council. The City Council is currently working on draft plans of how to refurbish the upper floors to provide affordable housing and accommodation for local arts businesses.

Cllr R Dennison commented that MTC could formally ask Lancaster City Council to review their planning policy in light of the number of residential properties being turned into Air B&B's.

The Council considered and approved the response to the Government's Inquiry into High Streets in Towns.

The Council also agreed to write to Lancaster City Council to request an update regarding the future plans for the Co Operative building on Regent Road.

Minute 2023/24 - 104 - Exclusion of the Press and Public

The Council resolved "That, in accordance with Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following business, on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of he business to be transacted or for other special reasons arising from the nature of that business or of the proceedings."

Minute 2023/24 - 105 - Sigh of the Sea

The Council considered and resolved to accept the end of grant monitoring report.

Minute 2023/24 - 106 - Vintage by the Sea - End of Grant Report

The applicant (Deco Publique) presented her end of grant report.

The Council considered and resolved to accept the end of grant monitoring report.

Cllr D Bottoms publicly thanked her for a great festival.

Minute 2023/24 - 107 - Festival and Events Grant Application

FGA 2023/24 - 015 - Vintage by the Sea 2024

Cllr J Slater asked about the festivals growth since inception and Deco Publique replied that festival had grown from 6000 to 50,000 visitors in 2023, something the organisers would like to sustain and continue. Deco Publique stated that in their grant application for 2024 they had asked for a larger grant, as the festival organisers would like to increase the festival footprint, to include more locations in the town.

Questions were asked with regard to visitor numbers, construction work for the Eden Project (what might the impact of this be on the main physical festival site) and the uncertainty of funding the festival in the future. Deco Publique advised that this year the organisation had applied and asked for funding much earlier than in previous years, to ensure that when planning the festival the organisers knew that funds had already been guaranteed.

Cllr G Knight suggested that Morecambe Town Council should enter into a discussion with Lancaster City Council with regard to a three-year funding agreement.

The Council resolved to approve a grant of £16,000.00 for this festival, with a caveat that if the contingency budget of £3,500.00 is not used then this money is returned to Morecambe Town

Council. The Council also requested that they are listed as a headline sponsor of the festival.

Minute 2023/24 - 108 - Community Grant Application

FGA 2023/24 - 016 - Armed Force Day 2024

The Council resolved to approve a grant of £11,000.00 for Armed Forces Day 2024 with the caveat that any unspent council funding must be returned (I.E no council funding must be used for any project following the event, if there is a surplus - all council funding must be used for the event). The Council also requested that they are listed as a headline sponsor of the festival.

Minute 2023/24 - 109 - Community Grant Application

GAA 2023/24 - 010

The Council considered the application and resolved not to award the applicant a grant.

Minute 2023/24 - 100 - Morecambe Kite Festival

Members discussed the recent announcement regarding the Morecambe Kite Festival. A range of views were expressed and there was acknowledgement that the festival brings in large numbers of visitors to the town, and that the Kite Festival is one of the three big festival events hosted annually in Morecambe.

The Council resolved to investigate how a Kite Festival could be delivered in Morecambe in 2025.

Cllr J Ainscough offered her thanks to the Officers for the work they had done in gathering information about the Kite Festival.