



Council Minutes

Minutes of the Council meeting held at the Civic Centre, Poulton-le-Fylde on Thursday 30 July 2015.

Councillors present:

The Mayor, Councillor Balmain, and the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Greenhough.

Councillor E Anderton	Councillor Gibson	Councillor Robinson
Councillor M Anderton	Councillor Henderson	Councillor Shewan
Councillor Ballard	Councillor Hodgkinson	Councillor Smith
Councillor Barrowclough	Councillor Ingham	Councillor B Stephenson
Councillor Beavers	Councillor Jones	Councillor E Stephenson
Councillor Berry	Councillor Kay	Councillor T Taylor
Councillor B Birch MBE	Councillor Lees	Councillor V Taylor
Councillor C Birch	Councillor McKay	Councillor A Turner
Councillor Bowen	Councillor Moon	Councillor S Turner
Councillor Catterall	Councillor Murphy	Councillor A Vincent
Councillor Collinson	Councillor Pimbley	Councillor Matthew Vincent
Councillor R Duffy	Councillor Orme	Councillor Michael Vincent
Councillor Bridge	Councillor Ormrod	Councillor Walmsley
Councillor Fail	Councillor Reeves	Councillor Wilson

Apologies: Councillors I Amos, R Amos, Lady Atkins, I Duffy, Holden and Ibison, Garry Payne (Chief Executive), Michael Ryan (Corporate Director, People and Places) and Terry Rogers (Armed Forces Champion).

Officers present:

Philippa Davies (Corporate Director, Resources)
Mary Grimshaw (Senior Solicitor)
Roy Saunders (Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager)
Peter Foulsham (Scrutiny Officer)
Gill Beaghan (Engagement Team)

Also present: Forty two members of the public.

COU. Confirmation of Minutes

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RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 25 June 2015 be confirmed as a correct record.

COU. Declarations of Interest

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- (1) Councillor V Taylor declared a “significant other interest” in agenda item 9(g) (Health and Community Engagement Portfolio Holder Executive report) because she was a patron of the St Oswald’s Dramatists drama group, which was one of the successful bidders for shaping your neighbourhood funding, referred to in the report, but stated that she had had not been involved in assessing or evaluating the bids.
- (2) Councillor A Vincent declared a significant other interest in agenda item 14 (notice of motion relating to a planning application for underground gas storage at Preesall) because his home would be directly affected by a pipeline to the proposed storage site. Councillor Matthew Vincent also declared a significant other interest for the same reason. Councillor Michael Vincent declared a significant other interest because, although he was not currently resident at his father’s house, he was obviously more affected than an ordinary member of the public.
- (3) Councillor Jones also declared a significant other interest in the same item because her house was also directly affected by the course of the proposed pipeline.

COU. Announcements

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The Mayor (Councillor Balmain) said that he had no announcements to make on Mayoral events, but he had been asked by the Leader of the Labour Group (Councillor R Duffy) to inform Council that Councillor Beavers would be the shadow cabinet member for health and community engagement.

COU. Presentation

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None.

COU. Public Questions and Statements

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The Mayor said that Councillors had been informed and notice had been published of requests submitted by two members of the public to make statements about the Teanlowe Sixty Plus Community Centre in Poulton. However, he had been informed that Mr Kidd-Whittaker no longer wished to make a statement and that a single statement about the community centre, directed to the Health and Community Engagement Portfolio Holder, would be made by Mr Howarth.

Mr Howarth made a five minute statement to the Council about the valuable services provided by the charity running the centre and the investment made over a number of years in the maintenance of the part of the building it occupied. He referred to the increasing problems of social isolation and loneliness which would occur amongst a significant number of elderly people if the day centre had to close and he asked what the Council was going to do to meet the needs of the growing elderly population in the borough. He said that the community group were willing to pay £2,500 per annum, "up front", in addition to the £3,500 per annum contribution they currently spend. He also referred to a grant application that he was pursuing from the Royal British Legion for the refurbishment of the toilets in the building. He then left the keys for the Council "to do with as they pleased".

Councillor V Taylor said that Mr Howarth had made a very emotional statement, but she did not accept many of the comments he had made.

She reiterated the point, made by the Resources Portfolio Holder in his response to Mr Howarth's previous statement in October 2014, that Wyre Council was not statutorily responsible for the delivery of adult social care services, which was within the remit of Lancashire County Council. Whilst she recognised the excellent work that was being undertaken from the centre, the Council's current financial situation and the extent of the expected further reductions in funding, meant that all assets had to be reviewed to ensure that their value was maximised in accordance with the Council's asset management strategy. This involved the disposal of assets that were either surplus to requirements, or did not make a sufficient rate of return through rental income.

Councillor Taylor said that, following Mr Howarth's attendance at the Council meeting in October, a meeting had been held to explore the opportunity for Age UK to be involved in the future operation of the day centre. The Council's understanding was that the community group, with the assistance of Age UK, were going to work on preparing a business plan to make the centre sustainable. However, to date, the Council had not seen any such plan. She said it was also disappointing that, whilst a number of options had been suggested by the Council, including exploring the possibility of sharing facilities within the Methodist Church in Poulton or St Chad's Church in order to minimise costs and improve the services offered, the group did not seem to want to consider any alternative options.

Councillor Taylor said that the value of the activities that were undertaken from the centre, or indeed the number of people who were assisted, was not in dispute. However, there were many similar voluntary groups operating in Wyre running community facilities and providing support to local residents, without a subsidy from the council tax payer.

Councillor Taylor said that she had also been very disappointed that Mr Howarth had said on Radio Lancashire that the Council would be making a decision on the continued operation of the day centre at this meeting, which was not the case, was very misleading to users of the centre and to

the general public, and did not help the process for considering the future use of the building. She said that the Council would continue to work with the Trustees of the day centre to find a workable solution to the current problem.

COU.
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Executive Reports

(a) **Leader of the Council**

The Leader of the Council (Councillor Gibson) submitted a report.

Councillor Gibson said that, further to the position on business rate pooling referred to in paragraph 2.7 to 2.11 of his report, some Councils had decided not to participate in the proposed business rate pooling arrangements for Lancashire. He said that this was a complicated issue and that a detailed report would be submitted to the September Council meeting.

Councillor R Duffy welcomed the proposals in the Lancashire Fairness Commission paper to reduce health inequalities, referred to 2.2 to 2.5 of the Leader's report, but expressed concern about how such improvements could be delivered in Wyre given the extent of the further budget cuts expected.

Councillor Gibson accepted that the extent of the further cuts, likely to be required in 2015/16 and 2016/17 would not be able to be absorbed without some impact on services. He said that some of the services referred to in the Fairness Commission paper related to Lancashire County Council services and, it was important that the Wyre area received its fair slice of funding for the provision of such services.

Councillor M Anderton said that when there had been a dispute about the interpretation of provisions in the Constitution relating to questions on executive reports in November 2014 and January 2015, the Leader had accepted that a task group or working party could be set up to review the Council Procedure Rules in Part 4 of the Constitution, but no such group had subsequently been set up.

Councillor Gibson said that the report on amendments to the Constitution included on the agenda for this Council meeting had been prepared to take account of the changes in the law and other circumstances. He said that, if the Labour Group wanted to propose changes to the Constitution, they could do so.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

(b) **Resources Portfolio Holder**

The Resources Portfolio Holder (Councillor A Vincent) submitted a report.

Councillor Vincent said, in response to a question from Councillor B Stephenson, that he could not give a categorical assurance that any of the Council's assets, including the Marine Hall, would not be sold at any time in the future. He assured Councillor Stephenson that there were more than sufficient reserves to keep the Council going for the next two or three years. From the financial pressures facing the Council it was clear that further cuts would need to be made in the future. He suggested, however, that part of the £280 million reserves held by Lancashire County Council could be spent to improve services in the County.

Councillor R Duffy welcomed the low levels of sickness absence reported in paragraph 3.3 of the report and asked that Councillors' gratitude be passed on to staff. She also said that the Council's cleaners should also be thanked for their conscientiousness and said that the toilets in the Civic Centre were cleaner than the toilets in the hospital in which she worked.

Councillor Vincent thanked Councillor Duffy for her comments and assured her that he would arrange for her comments to be passed on to the relevant staff.

Councillor Vincent said, in response to comments made by Councillor Shewan about the allocation of central government funding, that he accepted that the national non domestic rates system was in need of reform, to ensure that services were adequately funded, but pointed out that a large number of Labour controlled Councils had opposed previous reforms of the system.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

(c) Street Scene, Parks and Open Spaces Portfolio Holder

The Street Scene, Parks and Open Spaces Portfolio Holder (Councillor Henderson) submitted a report.

Councillor Henderson said that he was pleased to have attended a recent green flag awards event at which a number of Wyre's parks had been re-accredited and the Memorial Park had been awarded a green flag on its first application.

He also said that he was very pleased that, for the first time, the Council's recycling and composting figure had exceeded 50% during 2014/15. He said this was a credit to the borough but, some Council's achieved a 60% rate, so there was still room for improvement.

Councillor E Anderton expressed her thanks to the Street Scene team for the cleaning up operation following Tram Sunday. Councillor Henderson said that he would ask Mark Billington to pass

on the Councillors thanks for the work of the team, who, he said, had collected over 4 tonnes of rubbish following the event.

Councillor Henderson said, in response to questions from Councillor B Stephenson, that arrangements were being made for engineers to make a further check on the operation of the Lofthouse Clock to ensure that it was working correctly. He said that an attempt had been made to remove the graffiti reported by Councillor Stephenson but, the materials used by the Council had proved not to be entirely effective on the sandstone of the memorial and suitable chemicals to remove the remaining graffiti were being sought. He said that the base had been removed because it had been in a dangerous condition and would be replaced, possibly with a different material.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

(d) Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder

The Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder (Councillor Murphy) submitted a report.

Councillor Murphy said that he was pleased to be able to report the significant reduction in the number of job seeker allowance claims referred to in paragraph 4.2 of his report.

Councillor E Anderton pointed out that, with regards to the job seekers allowances figures, now that universal credit was being rolled out in Wyre, the figures quoted needed to take account of universal credit figures as well, in order to provide a complete picture. Councillor Anderton also expressed concern that there had been no consultation on the proposals for additional beach huts at Fleetwood with any of the ward councillors, local residents or the town council. She also suggested that any budget surplus on the Coastal Communities Fund scheme should be used for the full implementation of the skate park design originally proposed and on the improvement of the Marine Lake.

Councillor Murphy said that investigations were being undertaken to establish how the remaining funding within the Coastal Communities Scheme could be used. He assured Councillors that the money would stay in Fleetwood.

Councillor Murphy said, in response to a question from Councillor Barrowclough on paragraph 2.2 of the report, that the opening date for the water play facility depended on the weather, because a dry period was required to lay the final surface, but he had been assured that it would be ready by the end of the following week.

Councillor Murphy said, in response to a question from Councillor R Duffy that Job Centre Plus had informed the Council, in response to an earlier enquiry instigated by Councillor Duffy, that they did not

collate figures for jobs created broken down by type or location of job and was not therefore able to provide that information to the Council.

Councillor Murphy said, in response to a question from Councillor Shewan, that the Council had not yet been able to find anybody wishing to operate boats on the Marine Lake.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

(e) Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio Holder

The Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio Holder (Councillor Berry) submitted a report.

Councillor Berry agreed to pass on to the appropriate officers thanks expressed by Councillor R Duffy for the work undertaken by the CCTV control volunteers, particularly for their work throughout the Tram Sunday event. Councillor Berry said that the work of the volunteers was greatly appreciated both by the Council the Police.

Councillor Berry confirmed, in response to a question from Councillor Barrowclough, that the housing issue he had raised in his e-mail dated 23 July had been passed on to the relevant housing association and assured him that he would be updated when the outcome was known.

Councillor Berry said, in response to comments by Councillor Shewan about nuisance and potential health problems caused by seagulls, that the Council recognised that this was a serious issue and would do the best it could within the regulations currently in force to minimise the problems caused.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

(f) Leisure and Culture Portfolio Holder

The Leisure and Culture Portfolio Holder (Councillor Bowen) submitted a report.

Councillor Bowen said, when introducing her report, that further to comments made by Councillor E Anderton at the Cabinet meeting the previous day, a new review of bowling greens in the borough would be undertaken and a report would be submitted when that review had been completed.

Councillor Bowen confirmed, in response to a question from Councillor E Anderton, that the second round of training courses provided from the Coastal Communities Fund, referred to in paragraph 4.2 of her report, would be available for all businesses and traders in Fleetwood, both old and new, and would not just be targeted at the market traders.

Councillor Bowen agreed with comments made by Councillor Collinson about the success of the Garstang Agricultural Show and the benefit it brought to the local community. She said that the countryside rangers would have a stand at the show and that a variety of tourism information would be provided by the Council.

Councillor Bowen said, in response to a further question from Councillor Collinson, that various schemes for the improvement of Garstang Leisure Centre were being discussed with the YMCA and Councillors would be informed when proposals had been drawn up.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

(g) Health and Community Engagement Portfolio Holder

The Health and Community Engagement Portfolio Holder (Councillor V Taylor) submitted a report.

Councillor Taylor said, in response to the earlier comments about the aggressive behaviour of seagulls, that the number of seagulls was increasing but all seagulls were protected and only some species could be culled. The main problems in Wyre were caused by herring gulls which could only be controlled, not culled. She said that the Council would be involved in discussions with the Government about its plans to allow further measures to control gulls.

Councillor V Taylor said, in response to a question from Councillor Lees that, so far, she had only attended a couple of the meetings with various organisations regarding the commissioning of additional services to tackle loneliness and isolation in Wyre, referred to in paragraph 3.2 of her report. She said that she would be undertaking more such meetings in the future.

Councillor Taylor said, in response to comments made by Councillors Beavers, E Anderton and B Stephenson, that local councillors had an opportunity to support bids for shaping your neighbourhood funding and stressed that they continued to play an important role in the shaping your neighbourhood approach.

Councillor Gibson pointed out that shaping your neighbourhood leader members were able to consult with other Councillors in their areas and to submit bids for project funding. The new arrangements for the allocation of funding, involving the Chief Executive, the Head of Transformation and himself, were more transparent than the previous arrangements.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

(h) Comments and Questions from Cabinet Members

Councillor Gibson said, in relation to the comments made by Councillor A Vincent about the retention of business rates, that currently Wyre only retained 12% of the Council tax raised in Wyre, and that 74% was passed to Lancashire County Council, a higher proportion of which was spent on services in East Lancashire than in the Wyre area.

Councillor Murphy confirmed, in response to comments made by Councillor Gibson, that the comments made about the Council's development management performance in 7.1 of his report, were not in any way a criticism of the Council's planning officers. The reduced performance in the time taken to deal with planning applications (Wyre had been 11th in the country two years ago and was now 329th) was mostly due to the failure of the Lancashire County Council's highways team to submit comments on applications within the required timescale.

Councillor A Vincent said that Councillor E Anderton had confused two separate issues when commenting on beach huts. He said that income from the use of beach huts could be returned to the Council's general budget but that any underspends on the coastal communities fund projects could only be used on other projects included in that scheme, within the Fleetwood area.

Councillor Bowen emphasised the outstanding achievement made by the Director of People and Places and the Head of Culture, Leisure and Tourism in reducing significantly the running costs of the Marine Hall and turning it into a viable venue.

COU. Armed Forces Champion Report

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The Council's Armed Forces Champion, Terry Rogers, submitted a report setting out the current position on various issues relating to the implementation of the Armed Forces Community Covenant at Wyre.

Councillor R Duffy, supported by Councillor Gibson, formally thanked Mr Rogers for the valuable work undertaken.

RESOLVED that the periodic report submitted by the Armed Forces Champion be noted

COU. Planning Committee: Period Report

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RESOLVED that the report submitted by the Chairman of the Planning Committee (Councillor Greenhough) be noted.

COU. Constitution Amendments

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The Leader of the Council (Councillor Gibson) and the Corporate Director of Resources submitted a report on various proposed minor changes to the Council's Constitution.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the changes to Article 9 of the Constitution, relating to the terms of office of the Leader and Cabinet members, set out as track-changes in Appendix 1, be approved.
- (2) That the provision for a member of the public or a representative of a voluntary organisation or other agency to make a presentation at a Council meeting, currently set out in paragraphs 10.1, 10.2 and 10.3 of the Council Procedure Rules, attached as Appendix 2, be deleted and that subsequent paragraphs be re-numbered accordingly.
- (3) That the removal of the requirements in Section 11(1) of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 relating to Local Authority Petitions Schemes and the intention to simplify the arrangements for dealing with petitions at Wyre, be noted.

COU. Electoral Review Working Group

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The Leader of the Council (Councillor Gibson) and the Corporate Director of Resources submitted a report on a proposal to establish a working group to consider proposals for a review of the electoral divisions for Lancashire County Council.

RESOLVED that a group comprising Councillors A Vincent, Ballard, Bridge, Collinson, Robinson, Beavers and Lees be appointed to respond to the consultation process on the review of the electoral divisions for Lancashire County Council and to submit comments and proposals on behalf of the Council to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

COU. Notices of Motion: Underground Gas Storage at Preesall

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Councillors Gibson, R Duffy, Moon, Orme and V Taylor submitted the following motion, in accordance with paragraph 15 of the Council's procedure rules.

"That this Council condemns the decision by Lord Bourne, Government Energy Minister at the Department of Energy and Climate Change, to grant permission to Halite to store gas underground at Preesall.

This decision is an insult to the local residents who have worked so hard over many years to object to this proposal.

This Council calls on the Officers of Wyre Council and Lancashire County Council to work together to investigate the possibility of a judicial review into the process so that this perverse decision can be challenged."

RESOLVED, unanimously, following a debate, that the motion be approved.

The meeting started at 7.00 pm and finished at 8.44pm