



Fleetwood Town Council

Onward to a Better Future

THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING HELD ON
14th MARCH 2017
AT THE NORTH EUSTON HOTEL, FLEETWOOD 7p.m.

Present: Cllrs. T. Rogers (Chairman), M. Barrowclough, M. Stirzaker, N. Stuchfield, P. Tilling, E. Anderton, B. Glasgow, E. Stephenson, B. Stephenson.

Also present: Clerk to the Town Council, Sgt Nat Cox, and 13 members of the public were present. The meeting was opened by the Chairman, Cllr. Rogers, who welcomed everyone, and introduced Sg Nat Cox, from the Community Policing Team. All attendees were advised this was an informal meeting and members of the public could raise issues on any subject.

2243 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs. McLaughlan, Taylor, Hewitt and Raynor - apologies accepted.

2244 CHAIRMANS REPORT

The chairman reported a busy year for the Town Council with a good proportion of his and other Councillors time dedicated to working with LCC, Wyre Council and the Fleetwood Museum Trust members to ensure the Museum would be preserved for the community. Cllr Rogers thanked all those involved for their hard work, and although there are some delays in finalising insurance and lease arrangements it was hoped that an opening date, and presentation of the grant from the Town Council would be scheduled soon.

Two new Councillors were Co-opted to the Council last year, and the chair welcomed Cllrs Tilling and Raynor, and wished them good luck in their new duties. Farewell and best wishes were passed on the Cllr Fearon who has moved to Manchester. Thanks were made to all elected members who form part of the larger Fleetwood volunteer corps. Without the community spirit so evident in the town many projects and initiatives would not be the success they are.

The Chairman shares local concerns that many banks and businesses have left Fleetwood, however new businesses, cafes and restaurants have started up, both in the centre and on Freeport.

Team Fleetwood has not taken off as expected, as other matters have taken priority, however the Council aims to revisit the initiative with all key stakeholders and get things moving again.

Thanks were passed on to all Councillors involved, Wyre Council staff and PWRS for their efforts with Back on Track – clearing the lines and procuring a new engine.

Grant aid has been awarded to the following applicants: PWRS, Rotary Fireworks display, Scarecrow Festival, Bacca shop front restoration, Regenda community support, Willow Garden Project, Fleetwood Carnival, The CAB and the Royalettes.

The Town Council is represented on many community groups including the Clinical Commissioning group, Museum Trust, Healthier Wyre, Intercepted Food Group, Spice Project, PWRS and Give it a Go, to name a few.

In the coming year the Council will aim to finalise the Museum grant, establish an In-Bloom steering group, re-start the Team Fleetwood initiative, and will look, post Brexit, to encourage a return in some form, of the fishing industry (small fleet, and or processing business) to Fleetwood.

Councillors

T. Rogers (Chairman)
T. Taylor
N. Stuchfield

E. Anderton
C. McLaughlan
C. Raynor

M. Barrowclough
B. Stephenson
P. Tilling

B. Glasgow
E. Stephenson

R. Hewitt
M. Stirzaker



2245 MESSAGE FROM CAT SMITH MP

I'm pleased to submit my second report to Fleetwood Town Council's Annual Meeting as your Member of Parliament. Please accept my apologies for being unable to be with you this evening as Parliament is sitting. The last 12 months have been a turbulent time in politics, both domestically and internationally. Britain has decided to leave the European Union and much of the work of parliament in the coming years will be focused on making sure that Brexit delivers what was promised. My aim is to hold the Government to account throughout and push for the best possible deal: one that prioritises jobs, the economy and living standards. In Fleetwood this must mean a good deal for our local fishing industry, both in terms of returning catch to local boats, and ensuring that the fish processed in Fleetwood remains competitive both domestically and internationally.

Supporting individuals

An important, but often unseen part of my work as your MP lies in providing support to individuals in dealing with government agencies, and associated services whether that is the Department of Work and Pensions over a Personal Independence Payment assessment, or a housing association about their tenancy. To support my work in this area, I employ two full-time caseworkers. These are the people you are most likely to speak to if you call my office. I also hold two advice surgeries a month in Fleetwood where I meet individually with constituents who want to raise personal issues with me. Although this work rarely makes the media, it informs much of the policy and advocacy work I do, and for thousands of people is the way they will interact with their MP.

Many of you also write to me about issues that are being debated in Parliament. Sometimes these debates move quickly, but I continue my practice of responding to every letter and email that I receive in order to share how I have voted, and why I have voted that way.

On any given day in Westminster there are many events taking place, but where constituents ask me to attend particular events, I do try to do so, and where constituents come to Westminster as part of these events I will do my best to meet with you.

Supporting groups

Another large part of my work in the constituency is to meet with local groups to learn more about their work, and local individuals who are campaigning on particular issues. Again some of the meetings inform the broader policy and advocacy work I do, but it is also an opportunity for me to promote the work that local groups are doing, whether that is by sharing their work on my social media, or by raising their issues in Parliament.

I have become an Ambassador for Guiding in Lancashire and work closely with Scouts too, so visiting with local Scouts and Guides has become a regular part of my work. I have also continued my practice of meeting with every school group that comes to Westminster, as well as accepting many invitations to visit schools in the constituency. I have also had the opportunity to share in community celebrations and observances such as the summer carnival, Tram Sunday, and the services for Remembrance Day, and Sea Sunday. I was sorry not to make it to the Christmas Lights Switch on this year due to ill health.

I welcome the opportunity to meet with local organisations or campaign groups. To invite me to one of your events please send me an invitation via Cat.Smith.MP@parliament.uk or to the office at 50 Lord St, Fleetwood FY7 6DT.

Supporting our community

Fleetwood is a town full of ideas to celebrate our community, and bring in much needed economic opportunities – from the partnership between the Fleetwood Festival of Transport and Spareparts bringing tourists, trams, and the theatrical to Fleetwood, the work of the Town Council in bringing together various groups to get Fleetwood Back on Track, or the vision of the Wyre Estuary as a major source of tidal energy, and I have been pleased to support the work of each of these groups.

We have some great local businesses; large and small. Fisherman's Friend is recognised across the world, and the Fleetwood Beach Kiosk is building a profile for itself well-beyond Fleetwood through the social media skills of Craig McOmish, but other key Fleetwood businesses sometimes struggle. The Market is one example of a key part of our business heritage that has struggled to get the support it needs. I have met with market traders on several occasions, and supported them in their demands that Wyre Borough Council properly maintain, support, and promote the market. I'm pleased that some progress has been made on this issue, but there is more still to be done.

It is clear that what Fleetwood needs isn't more austerity, but more investment, whether that is each of us choosing to support our high street, or the Government investing in our schools and the NHS.



Cat Smith
Member of Parliament for Lancaster & Fleetwood

2246 OPEN SESSION FOR THE ELECTORATE

Sgt Nat Cox (NC) introduced himself. He has 13 years' experience in the force, 12 years spent at Blackpool. He is keen to engage with the community as much as possible and encouraged members of the public (MOP) to get in touch with policing issues.

MOP asked NC about crime statistics and trends in Fleetwood – NC reported that statistics were improving overall, although there had been an increase in shoplifting attributed to a single suspect who would be summonsed to Magistrates court soon. Some commercial burglaries had taken place and 1 suspect has been arrested – another suspect was out on licence and has returned to custody. A spate of un-solved car related crime stopped around the time of these arrests.

MOP asked NC to look at problems around schools. NC advised that the Community Road Watch team would attend if specific issues were reported – they were already watching 4 schools in Thornton where problems have been reported with dangerous parking and speeding. MOP has similar concerns, and other attendees raised problems outside Flakefleet, St Wulstans and Charles Saer schools, mainly in the morning.

MOP asked NC if the PACT meetings could be re-formed. NC advised that in his experience it has proved more effective for individuals to contact him or his team directly and gave details on how to do this. PACT meetings in the past have dwindled to low attendance and the same issues being raised by the same individuals, which were usually not policing matters. Fleetwood also still has a staffed enquiry desk that MOPs can call at and if issues are raised on facebook, the site is regularly monitored and replies posted.

MOP asked NC about anti-social behaviour (ASB) by large groups of young people at and around the Marine Hall. This is becoming a concern as the groups are large, and there are issues with alcohol, some of the individuals are from other parts of Wyre. Visitors to the Marine Hall are being put off – especially at night time. It was also mentioned that these groups are starting to congregate at the back of the Mount area and criminal damage has taken place. Cllr Rogers has already met with NC about this issue and the Police are keen to address this growing problem – future reports will advise on progress.

MOP asked NC if there was a chance alleys behind rows of housing could be checked for ASB as there have been problems in his area. Again NC advised that if a report was made a car will be sent out with PCSOs to check. The community team are keen to spend time targeting problem areas rather than putting out general patrols which may not be as responsive. The team are also training some officers up to patrol on bikes, and hope to have these operational later in the year– as usual, please report issues if you want them to be investigated.

Cllr B Stephenson asked NC if he could advise on any additional road safety measures in Fleetwood such as speed humps, cameras, enforcement of the 20 limit etc. NC advised that in response to reports there were 2 options, to either deploy the community road watch team (who can issue warning letters only) or the Central Processing Unit Speed enforcement team (who can issue penalty notices and points). Humps or fixed speeding cameras have not been identified as a solution as the policing team need more mobile enforcement solutions to address specific reports.

MOP asked if LCC and the Local Police could be approached once again to correct the signage for the 20 zones on Dock St and the Esplanade. NC agreed this was an issue and will keep on at LCC to make the signage correct.

MOP asked about the railway, and if there were any proposals to get people from the planned terminal (opposite Chris Allen Garage) into the Town. Cllr Stirzaker confirmed a bus transfer had been discussed at the Back on Track meetings. In response to another question she confirmed that due to some encroachment by the LCC cycle path works, it was not likely that the track would be extended as far as the Three Lights pub. Cllr Stuchfield advised that Network Rail were very happy with the work done so far and were costing up repairs and replacements required on the track. Wyre Council were criticised for passing the plans for the Fish Park which did not make allowances to accommodate the railway.



Cllr Anderton thanked Cat Smith for her support with the Pier Site planning objections and the one click template she had put on line to assist people in commenting on the application. She expressed her disappointment that the new application was almost identical to the previous one, and re-assured the MOPs present that she was working to make everyone's objections count in the consideration of the application.

MOP asked if the re-organisation for the new municipal year would alter the make-up of the planning and other committees. Cllrs Anderton and Rogers confirmed that this may be the case, especially with the changes to the Mayor elect, and deputy mayor elect posts.

The Clerk advised there were problems with the Town Council website in that some links were not functioning and it had not been possible to update information. She asked MOPs to bear with the council whilst updates were made with the hosting company. A new test website will be built and put forward for approval in the next financial year.

MOP advised she had been on the allotment waiting list since 2007 and asked about the likelihood of her getting a plot? She was advised that there were 70+ on the list and unfortunately it did not move very fast because allotments freed-up very rarely.

2247 DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next full Council meeting on Tuesday 28th March 2017 at the North Euston Hotel, 7pm.

The meeting closed at 7.55 p.m.

Signed

Dated