

Garstang Town Council

Minutes of the Virtual Extraordinary Town Council Meeting Held on 8 June 2020, 7.30pm

Present: Chairman - Cllr Webster

Cllr Allan	✓	Cllr Leech	✘	Cllr Salisbury	✓
Cllr Brooks	✓	Cllr Mitchell	✓	Cllr Webster	✓
Cllr Halford	✓	Cllr Pearson	✓		
Cllr Hynes	✓	Cllr Ryder	✓		

Also present: Wyre Ward Cllr D Atkins, County Cllr Turner.
Gordon Harter, Chair - Town Trust, Naomi Walker representing IGT (Independent Garstang Traders), Richard Whyman on behalf of 17 town centre retail businesses, Ruth Bruce - Fairtrade representative, Chair/representative of neighbouring parishes Cabus, Barnacre with Bonds and Kirkland, Fiona Finch LEP and 15 members of the public; making a total of 35 participants

024(2020-21) Apologies for absence

Cllr Leech

Wyre Cllr R Atkins

The Mayor reported apologies from Dave Sharples, Catterall PC and Cllr D Atkins reported apologies from Wyre Cllr Collinson.

025(2020-21) Declaration of Interests and Dispensations Resolved:

None

026(2020-21) The meeting was adjourned to let non-Town Cllrs speak before item 4 was considered by Town Cllrs.

A summary of comments are as follows:

- County Cllr Turner gave an update on the current situation with LCC. The Lancashire resilience forum are working on details for businesses to ensure that they are Covid secure.
- Wyre Cllr Atkins, we have to work together, to keep Garstang a vibrant town. She would make enquiries about making parking free at the High Street car park. Need to review signage.
- Richard Whyman – need to take collective action. Find a way to support everyone and work together; he spoke on behalf of 17 businesses.
- Gordon Harter, Chair Town Trust, hope to get the open-air market open this Thursday with safety precautions. Looking at getting a road closure as soon as possible. How can this be progressed?
- Trader – Need a centralised centre point of information, click on a link and see what Garstang has to offer. Need safety and accessibility during the pandemic

- Naomi Walker – Real opportunity here, a lot of businesses are worried. Would like real cohesion between TC, Wyre Council and traders. Showcase Garstang for what it has to offer.
- Richard Whyman, critical that the town adopts a plan immediately, and use the skills of those present. Empower an action group to start tomorrow.

The meeting was reconvened

027(2020-21) Market Town Working Group - Covid -19

The Mayor outlined the agenda item, saying that Richard Whyman had written to the Town Council and requested that a market town working group be set up, to pursue the opportunities and rescue plan to ensure Garstang is a safe retail destination.

The letter covers many issues including:

1. Welcome back initiative
2. Safety of the high street & social distancing
3. Traffic calming measures
4. Riverside car parking
5. Town maps and signs
6. Bollards and signs
7. Marketing of Garstang as a retail destination & service

Before lockdown, the Mayor reported that, IGT had been keen to meet with the TC to discuss a plan of what can be done, what will be done and people that will be responsible. We need short, medium and long term plans and goals.

Comments from Cllrs Allan and Mitchell had been included in the agenda paper, looking at ways the TC could engage with the local businesses.

The Mayor informed the attendees about Wyre Council's 'Reopening High Street Safely Fund'. Recently it had been announced, from central government, that Councils across England are to share £50m of additional funding to support the safe reopening of high streets and other commercial areas. The money will allow local authorities to put in place additional measures to establish a safe trading environment for businesses and customers. The TC has ascertained that the district of Wyre has been allocated £ £99,180. Wyre were seeking views from Town & Parish Councils. The response to Wyre, required a questionnaire to be completed; deadline 17.00 this Wednesday, 10/6

The meeting was adjourned, to allow the Mayor to ask non-Town Councillors if anyone would like to be in the group.

The responses were as follows:

- Naomi Walker was keen to get involved and thought that any business in the town would want to get on board.
- The Mayor reported that Dave Sharples would like to be involved; as well as being a Catterall Parish Cllr, he was also Secretary to LALC Wyre Area Committee, and a former Director of the GDP (Garstang & District Partnership).
- The Mayor reported that Cllr Leech was keen to get involved.

- Richard Whyman said that it was important for TC to take lead, need to bring all elements of the town together.
- Cllr Pearson involved in Britain in Bloom, continue to make Garstang an attractive place and wished to be involved.
- Kate – Clerk to Town Trust, Town Trust and herself would like to be involved with the working group.
- Cllr Turner keen to get involved, make the town accessible and Covid secure, and there is money to do this. Canal towpaths is a long term project to resurrect, to get more people into Garstang.
- Cllr D Atkins keen to get involved with the working group. It was crucial to get the form submitted to Wyre.
- Richard Whyman - there is urgency now, we need to be careful how we proceed
- One member spoke about the opening dates for shops, with the current pandemic, was this realistic?
- Cllr Turner spoke that the R value in Wyre was below 1.
- Cllr Brooks - all the traders need to get together. He said that, after speaking to some traders, the Thursday market did not bring in trade to retail premises.
- The representative from Garstang Cycling club spoke of how, during the pandemic, there is an upsurge in people cycling socially. There are lots of opportunities for Garstang to develop cycling. Gordon Harter disagreed with Cllr Brooks; the town could not be choosy about who visited Garstang. He wished to join the group.
- Lyn Nickson representative of the Town Trust and Garstang Chamber of Trade spoke of how there are approximately 140 individual business in Garstang Town centre. We have lost the ability to communicate verbally. We need ambassadors who can talk to individual shop keepers. Would like to part of a team who talks to businesses.
- Damain Carr said that communication been a bit poor recently in the town centre. It is so important that the Town work together, let us build on tonight. He was happy to be involved in the group.
- Oliver - Get a mailing list group together and include this with Cllr Mitchell's community engagement work.

The Mayor ascertained that the following would like to be involved in a working group:

- Dave Sharples (Catterall PC & LALC Wyre Area Secretary)
- Lyn Nickson
- Cllr D Atkins
- County Cllr Turner
- Damian Carr
- Naomi Walker
- Gordon Harter Chair Town Trust
- Kate Rowe, Clerk to Town Trust
- Richard Dyer
- Richard Whyman
- Phil cycling club
- Lara

- Oliver
- Lynn Harter
- Norman Howell (Barnacre PC)

The meeting was then closed to members of the public.

The Mayor asked if Garstang Town Council would wish to lead a Market Town Working Group and who would like to become involved.

Resolved: That the Town Council lead the Market Town working group. The TC **further resolved** that the group be led by Cllr Allan and that Cllrs Leech, Mitchell, Pearson and Webster assist. The TC gave delegated authority to the Clerk and Mayor Deputy Mayor to complete the Wyre questionnaire form. The form to be circulated to all Town Cllrs and the working group representatives who expressed an interest to join the working group, to receive their comments. The Mayor reported on working group protocol and agreed that the guidance and advice be circulated to the working group.

The Mayor thanked everyone for attending and contributing to a positive meeting.

The meeting finished at 20.45