

Whitby Town Assembly – 25 March 2024

Present: 32 present; including 8 town councillors
Cllr Robert Dalrymple Whitby Town Mayor, chairing
Cllr Jonathan Harston taking minutes

Cllr Robert Dalrymple, Whitby Town Mayor, opened the meeting and welcomed those attending, and clarified procedures.

- 1a: Minutes of the 20 March 2023 town assembly meeting were noted and approved.
- 1b: Minutes of the 4 September 2023 town assembly meeting were noted and approved.
- 1c: Minutes of the 18 September 2023 town assembly meeting were noted and approved.

2a: Report back in connection with 20 March 2023 town assembly.

The assembly agreed to ask Whitby Town Council to write to North Yorkshire Council regarding school mergers and a public enquiry into the future of education provision. WTC wrote to NYC on 27-Mar-2023. There has been no response from NYC.

The assembly agreed to ask WTC to write to the chairs of governors regarding school mergers. WTC wrote on 28-Mar-2023, there has been no response.

The assembly agreed to ask WTC to write to NYC regarding bus provision. NYC has responded saying there were looking into the matter.

The assembly supported Cllr Wild's proposal to write to NYC requesting a Parish Governance Review. NYC replied stating that a review would not be done before 2026. A recent update from the current review of NYC election divisions is that Parish Governance Reviews would be done once the NYC review is completed, in time for the 2027 elections.

2b: Report back in connection with 4 September 2023 and 18 September 2023 town assemblies. Two town polls were called at the 4 September meeting, and a further poll was called at the 18 September meeting. These polls were held on 6 October.

* The Town Development Market Place project should be re-examined: YES:262 NO:42

* The Maritime Hub project should be re-examined: YES:247 NO:56

* Whitby Town Councillors should resign: YES:225 NO:73

Whitby Town Council noted the results, and sent the recommendations to the Government Minister. There has been an acknowledgement, but no further response.

2b: Report back in connection with 4 September 2023 town assembly.

Two town polls were called, and were held with the poll called on 18 September

Proposed: NW, Seconded: AA

Whitby Town Council should write again to the minister regarding the Market Place and Maritime Hub proposals.

Agreed.

3: Discussion on issues relating to the town

The assembly directed that the minutes should not include the full names of those people present or speaking.

DD: The town is treated like a joke. It is a parish, but because of that it is treated as a village. All the local villages are having trouble with holidaymakers, milking the local area. When Whitby joined Scarborough in 1974 Whitby was rich. We had watched the Germans bomb Flowergate, the Turnbolls had given the town the Turnbull Ground. We had eight shipbuilders before Scarborough

took over. Why have a Maritime Hub, it's nonsense when there is no fishing industry. Fish are landed at Peterhead.

St. Hilda's House, Eskholme and Church House were Whitby UDC buildings sold off by Scarborough Borough Council. Where has the money gone? The hospital was given to the town, given to locals by locals, for locals, and was taken over. It has gone from 108 beds to 60 beds.

We wasted fighting WW2 for this. My father bought Capella House for £300 after WW2 with his discharge money. He upgraded it, put in gas, electricity, water, refurbished it. The Labour government tried to buy it off him for £1, and it was demolished in the slum clearances. The town was milked by people in government.

Chair: WTC tries to help Whitby and improve and reverse decline.

VA: Discussing education: I attended North Yorkshire Council's Scarborough & Whitby area meeting. It wasn't publicised, and I only found out by chance. The issues covered included walking safety from Stainsacre into town to Caedmon and Eskdale school sites. The walking route is along the Cinder Track to avoid roads, parents say it is not safe in winter when it is dark. It is bad underfoot and has no lighting. NYC have said they will look into it and get more information.

PG: The route also has bad mobile phone coverage as well as no lighting. NYC say that as it is not a highway it is not lit, but why is it not lit as a walking route?

VA: NYC say that parents are responsible for their children's safety, but it is NYC that are forcing pupils to go to Caedmon School instead of Eskdale, so forcing pupils to walk this route.

AA: Will WTC pursue this to get more info?

Chair: There are issues with knowing when NYC have local meetings. WTC councillors did not know of the meetings.

FW: I read in the Gazette that NYC councillors would be discussing education, the last line mentioned the meeting was in the Spa, but I was told I could not speak. I tried to raise education issues, but was told I couldn't ask. The overhead screen too small to read, and microphones failed to work.

ID: The big issue is value for money. When I contacted Robert Goodwill MP I was fobbed off. Council Tax is higher here than most other places. WTC has no powers and chooses the wrong things. Examples include the pavements not being repaired, the cliff lift not being repaired, the new site for the cemetery [ed: these are NYC responsibilities, not WTC]. There's no value for money. Lots of money for the police but only two officers at the Goth Weekend. We don't want the plinth in the Market Place. It's wasteful spending money on trees when pavements are breaking up. The £1800 per year that I pay is not value for money.

DD: The Old Town Hall and Brunswick Street used to have railings, they were taken away during the war. It was promised they would be replaced, but they never have. The country has been sold off. My electricity is now German, what was the point of WW2?

JN: There is lots of unhappiness about the government and NYC. NYC treats Whitby with contempt, both officers and some councillors. When I write I only get an acknowledgement, never get a proper reply. Area meetings are not advertised very well. If the public is allowed to attend they should be allowed to speak.

JN: Scarborough Borough Council allocated £100k to repair the cliff lift, I've asked NYC about this three times, and had no answer. We should have a functioning cliff lift. We need to write to NYC to ask where SBC's £100k from the sunshine fund gone.

FW: I got an answer saying the cliff lift repair will cost £3m, so they will use a bus shuttle instead. The paddling pool won't open until summer – the pool is full of dirty water. The season starts at Easter, so the pool should be open. There are claims the dirty water is there to stop people cycling through it.

Chair: We need to be more forceful. We need to tell NYC that this is not acceptable. We need to ask NYC what they are doing about ignoring the contracts, and force them to reply not just to acknowledge. Many people report never getting replies.

FW: There's nothing to stop CCing to others.

Chair: WTC usually CCs to the relevant local NYC councillor. What is realistic to force them to reply.

NW: Could protest at County Hall.

VA: The next meeting of the Area Committee is in June in Scarborough. Questions can be put before the Tuesday before the meeting so that officers can prepare an answer.

HC: With the paddling pool, we have spent a lot of time pestering. Workforce arrives, do little work, and then go away. The water needs to be there to prevent cracking. The man running the chalets looks after the pool. The maintenance people wouldn't talk to WTC. We need to insist that NYC officers come to WTC meetings.

Chair: We have written multiple times to NYC, but they decline or refuse.

FW: Mustn't let them substitute councillors with officers as officers will not give an answer.

Chair: At the last NYC meeting at the Coliseum even councillors couldn't ask questions. The paddling pool needs to be emptied, it needs staff present, in winter a child could fall through ice, needs to be emptied in winter or a fence would be needed.

AJ: NYC demolished the playground at Dundas Gardens without notice. Cllr Trumper offered locality budget funding for a replacement. NYC are dragging their feet. Can WTC support?

Proposed: AJ, Seconded: UK

Whitby Town Council should write to North Yorkshire Council to ask that they make provision for a children's play area to replace the Dundas Gardens suitably close to replace it.

Whitby Town Council should write to North Yorkshire Council to ask why the paddling pool has been left dirty and when it will be cleaned and opened.

NYC must send a reply within 21 days.

Agreed.

JN: Most of the water in the paddling pool could be rain. We need to ask to ensure the pool is emptied and cleaned before being filled for use. NYC must not save money at the expense of safety of users.

FW: Does the pool have its own water meter?

Chair: Yes.

NW: I've had responses from NYC, but they evade answers. They only reply to parts of the questions, and I have to chase them up. Could be better to have a separate letter for each individual issue.

Proposal: VA, Seconded: UK

Whitby Town Council should write to North Yorkshire Council to express concern about the safety of the walk-to-school routes along the Cinder Track. Teachers and parents say it is not safe.

Agreed

AA: What is the procedure to communicate from WTC to NYC and councillors? Do elected councillors do anything? (NYC Leader) Carl Les said "we will work together". We haven't had any evidence of working together.

Chair: When asking NYC we ask for written reply so we can follow it up.

ID: The big issue of the council merger. They said it would save money, but there have been no savings.

Chair: NYC are having to make Council Tax uniform across whole council area.

ID: Nobody is ever held responsible for bad decisions, taxpayers have to pay for squandered money and bad decisions.

Chair: We were told the merger would bring efficiencies, but there's no sight of them. NYC claims it has taken on loads of debts.

JN: It was claimed there would be £35m of savings, but the Year 1 budget is £135m in deficit. They completely underestimated problem of merging eight councils with eight different structures and systems. It needs more time and people and money.

HC: It's annoying that the same useless SBC staff are now working for NTYC, so there's no difference.

FW: NYC has a smaller population than Bristol, but a massively larger area.

NW: With the Market Place plinth and potential closure of Sandgate, it is not wide enough for fire engines, etc. not many people are aware of the proposals. Church Street is to be blocked at the Black Horse for scaffolding. Lifeboatmen won't be able to get down, neither will ambulances, etc. I had a discussion with the project manager at NYC. Only immediately adjacent residents were contacted, nobody else knows.

FW: A former miner says that high level scaffolding possible.

VA: Is WTC aware?

Chair: No.

ST: I went to a Town Deal board meeting. People have complained about proposals. But I never had information to know if it was correct or not. I would expect that as a member I would have information on what proposed. Also WTC should be informed. Everything went to public

consultation. Most responses were in favour, but if people who object don't reply it will not be known.

HC: The Town Clerk has been trying to get information. We know nothing about traffic lights and scaffolding.

SR: It's supposed to start in mid-May.

VA: NYC highways say they don't know about the proposals.

CR: Surely when putting scaffolding you start with

Chair: It is possible to put scaffolding up and keep the road clear.

FR: Only people in the Market Square have been contacted. People up Church Street don't know anything, they won't be able to get up for 14 months.

PG: There's a lack of communication of achievements.

Chair: Councillors review minutes before the next meeting.

PG: Why was the Town Assembly meeting poorly advertised? There was only 11 days notice. You need to keep looking on website in case it appears.

Chair: We keep telling NYC that we can't be ignored, but we have gone from small fish in SBC to even smaller fish in NYC.

PG: Congratulations on the Christmas Market. It is good for locals and brings people in. The museum staff are very good. There are great displays and interactive displays. WTC mission statement is "We strive to make Whitby a better place to live, work and play". How does WTC do this?

Chair: 13,000 people live in Whitby, we try to make the best we can, we try in those areas we control.

ID: There is an issue with the administration costs of WTC. Do we really need three clerks?

Chair: We have 1.5 clerks and one museum curator. We have income from other sources on top of the council tax precept.

HC: When we advertised for the new clerk, at the interview we asked if he knew how big a job he was taking on. He assured us he did.

The meeting closed at 8pm.