

WTC Meeting – Thursday 20th July 2023

Disclaimer: These observations are **not** the 'official' minutes of the meeting, they are supplied by Whittlesey Town Council, normally (1) month following this meeting and can be viewed on their website. Decisions and Voting at this meeting may be ratified and confirmed at the following months meeting.



Members of the Council present: 12 – apologies received Cllr Roy Gerstner & Diana Dickinson
Cllr Nawaz 10 minutes late

Members of the public present: 34 {record attendance}

I was unable to attend this meeting, these notes and observations were taken by another Councillor. (See disclaimer at the end)

Previous minutes: These were in the pack.

Cllr Boden asked that it be minuted that Cllr Mockett had offered to withdraw as representative from Burnthouse Farm in favour of Cllr Wicks, but Cllr Wicks declined.

Cllr Dorling asked that the record show that not all the votes recorded as 'Unanimous' were in fact so as some members declined to vote and there had been no request for 'against' or 'abstentions.

Minutes signed with those amendments.

Public Forum:

5 members wished to speak - 3 minutes each.

Steve Robertson: Spoke on the previous meeting.

He was "totally embarrassed by the blatant stitch-up" by the majority party.

Experience was ignored. The voting was chaotic.

There were miscounts, confusion and votes changed. He questioned why there was a sudden need for the separation of Mayor & Leader roles & suspected it was a ploy to give more 'leading party' members positions of authority. This view strengthened by Cllr Bodens comments at the Finance & Policy meeting that "it gave more people a chance at a position of authority". What are their objectives?

(Cllr Boden raised a point of order to correct a statement. He said he had been misquoted and that the separation gave the opportunity for more people to have access to the position of Mayor as it was no longer a political appointment and could be fulfilled by any member of the council.)

Alan Bessant: Spoke as a SaxonGate representative. There has been a massive increase in complaints. EA were very slow to respond. He wanted to impress on the council the effect that operations there is having on residents. The situation is not acceptable, and the council and agencies need to remain committed.

Phillip Cumberland: (Local resident) spoke in the need to employ a street cleaner. He presented a document of approximate costings that showed it would cost about £5 per year per dwelling.

Joe Jennings: (Whittlesey Emergency Food Fund). He described the situation the food bank found itself in last year when they had to move out of Whittlesey Church and were offered a place at the library. That offer had to be withdrawn when asbestos was found there. They were then offered the use of a changing rooms at the Manor Leisure Centre. Their members cleared the room out, redecorated, had an electrician install new sockets & light. He discovered very recently, through a chance conversation, that the football team had had to move out of that room due to the discovery of asbestos there - and they had been working in it! His wife is undergoing tests for breathing difficulties. He is asking what information the council has on asbestos at the Manor, did we know? How often are checks made? Is there a register?

David Mason: Shocked to hear of Ex Cllr Ray Whitwell's resignation. The council has list a very valuable and experienced member. He will be sadly missed.

Also wished to support Joe Jennings comments. Asbestos is safe if undisturbed, but the work they did would definitely disturb any asbestos present.

Items for Discussion

1. Appointments to outside bodies.

Cllr Wainwright spoke my piece. Cllr Boden only one to respond. Suggested that I (as an inexperienced Councillor) had misunderstood the process. Stated that Cllr Whitwell had admitted to an error in presenting. There had been no intention to exclude any members not part of "the Ruling Party"!

2. WTC Communications

Cllr Dorling questioned what controls are in place to control communication with the public. Mentioned the Facebook page - some comments are inaccurate, sometimes posted as first person singular, rather than 'we' for the council instead of an individual.

Concern that people blocked by Councillors can't see their posts or comments.

Potential of exposure to GDPR liabilities through uncontrolled posts.

Cllr Sennitt Clough commented, some valid points, but "refused to be lectured on proper use of Facebook by a group responsible for posts like the ones here" (presents collation of posts from Cllrs Dorling, Wicks & Wainwright taken over previous 6 months)

??? Someone [KM? I forgot] commented that we need to ensure nothing posted is libelous or incorrect.

Cllr Arman stated that they (as admins) do not block anyone from the group and have a rigorous review process in place for new membership requests.

3. Social Media

Cllr Boden, already covered in previous topic.

4. Car Boot on the Manor

Cllr Black presented suggestion for holding a car bot sale on the manor field - free entry in return for donation to Carers Together (A Mayoral Charity).

Comments of support from several members.

5. Junior Councillors

Cllr Black stated that since joining council he had heard much negative talk about local young people. Need to engage and untrue.

Suggesting two positions be made available for young people to "sit on council".

Cllr Boden, encourages idea, says that Standing Orders could be modified to allow them to attend and join in discussions, *but not to vote*.

Cllr Nawaz agrees with suggestion but suggests going even further - form a youth council to feed into the full council.

Topic passed to Projects committee to look into it and report back.

6. Manor Benches.

Cllr Gerstner, report read out. (See end)

General agreement that continued replacement of like for like is a waste of money.
Cllr Dorling, reports that Mr Hobbs says the one metal bench there is little used.

Referred to Projects & Mr Hobbs to be invited to join in the discussions there.

7. HGVs & Rat Runs

Cllr Boden highlighted major concerns that were raised when the Fibre works along the A605 to the west of town caused Thory's lorries to use Stonald Road. Thory's had been very responsive, monitored truck usage through the nachos and advised their drivers to stick to the main road, even though use of Stonald Road is legal.

Presented projections that show Kellyvision & Cemetery Road roundabouts will shortly be beyond capacity. Transit times likely to be 6 mins & 4 mins respectively within 5 years.

Initial report into southern relief road shows potential for viability.

Next stage (Strategic Outline Business Case) is financed and being tendered by FDC.
New Road is still a long way off and traffic congestion in the town will inevitably get a lot worse and lead to many more rat runs before it gets better. We need to be prepared.

Outside Body Report - none.

F&P report

Draft minutes available.

All members are to be circulated a copy of the Standing Orders in order to receive suggestions for improvements.

The process for donation requests is to be reviewed to ensure it is fit for purpose.

Two requests reviewed (Extravaganza and bobby Scheme) with rejected as the figures presented did not demonstrate the need for funding.

Financial Documents: in the pack. No discussion.

Planning Committee Report: 17th July reports not yet complete. Waiting additional information from Cllr Black.

Invitations: Service for 70th anniversary of end of Korean War to be held at the Whittlesey War Memorial at 10:45 on 27/07/2023.

Young Technician are to represent "Chitty Chatty Bang Bang" at SHSCC.

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www.whittleseytowncouncil.gov.uk

Go to the top Tab Bar – Council Matters

Scroll down to Current Councillors or Find My Councillors.

Contact details are then shown for your Councillor in your area.



**The next Full Council Thursday 21st September at 19:30
There is no August meeting.**

I am Roy Gerstner the **only** Councillor in Whittlesey who makes regular reports on Council, Public and Community Group meetings.

I have done so for more than 13+ years both as a member of the public and as a Town Councillor. **I have made 7,000+ postings on this site.**

I have been elected as an **Independent** Fenland District Councillor for The South Ward of Whittlesey along with Cllr Mrs Kay Mayor

(Conservative)

I have been elected as an **Independent** Whittlesey Town Councillor for the South Ward of Whittlesey South along with Cllr Diana Dickinson (Conservative)

Primarily I report on Council meetings & business (Both at FDC & WTC) to keep the electorate informed on both what I am actively involved with and in part other interests that I believe the electorate within Whittlesey & District may also wish to be informed.

My Web-Blog is community based and I report and comment on many events, meetings and subjects.

I occasionally make a mistake and more than happy to correct if it pointed out to me.

If you have any issues or concerns outside of the Whittlesey South, you are welcome in the first instance to contact your own local Councillor.

If you contact me – I am more than happy to forward it to them.

e&oe

©Roy Gerstner. If you have a generic issue or wish to make a comment, I am more than happy to publish or promote any community events – (subject to meeting publishing criteria)

See next page ref Picnic Bench ongoing damage.

Agenda item for full council meeting Thursday 20th July 2023

Ongoing vandalism of picnic benches on the Manor Field Whittlesey.

For those Councillors unaware of the history.

8 new (2 of which are disabled accessible) were a Street Pride and Whittlesey Town Council project by Cllr Roy Gerstner.

I applied and obtained funding from the Glassmoor Wind Turbine fund of approx £5,000 and WTC also funded some £5,000.

Permission was obtained from FDC and fully consulted though out

The 8 benches were professionally installed in concrete bases in August 2021.

Within the first 4 weeks minor vandalism had taken place on two on the benches in the form of minor fire damage.



Within 8 weeks the first damage was done to one of the disabled tables.

During 2021 **3** other incidents of damage were reported.

In 2022 a further **4** incidents of vandalism were reported including 1 bench that was completely destroyed – having been set on fire (Police informed)

During 2023 a further 4 incidents to date have taken place the latest 2 having occurred this week.

Mr Alan Hobbs the Vice Chairman of Whittlesey Street Pride has throughout repaired the benches. He now has no further parts and is finding the exercise somewhat futile in both his time and resources.

I would like the Council to discuss the future of these picnic benches, with the following options.



1/ Does WTC want to fund someone to carry on repairing these picnic benches.

2/ Mr. Hobbs will maintain the 'safety integrity' by removing damaged/dangerous parts.

3/ When a picnic bench becomes unserviceable – do WTC have it taken out.

4/ There may be a possibility of replacing with 'metal' benches, however funding would need to be sought.

Please accept my apology I am unable to attend the meeting.

Roy Gerstner