

Minutes of a meeting of Matlock Town Council held on Monday 15 July 2024 at 6.00pm in the Imperial Rooms, Matlock

Present: Cllr Jason Knighton (Chair) (JK), Cllr Steve Wain (SW), Cllr Len Best (LB), Cllr Sue Burfoot (SB), Cllr Pat Wildgoose (PW), Cllr Diane Fletcher (DF), Cllr Marilyn Franks (MF), Cllr Ashley Orwin (AO)

In attendance: Simon Hosmer, Town Clerk (SH)

Meeting begins at 18:00

2412/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr David Hughes – Family commitment

Cllr Paul Cruise – Not present and no apologies were sent

Cllr Steve Flitter – Stated his intention to leave at 19:15

2413/24 VARIATION OF ORDER OF BUSINESS AND DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

None were made

2414/24 REQUEST FOR DISPENSATION

None were received

2415/24 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC, POLICE, COUNTY COUNCIL OR DISTRICT COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES

No members of the public were present

The Clerk mentioned he had invited the police.

SB: In my role as a District Councillor I feel that at some point we will need to have a discussion about Planning again. I realise it's not on the agenda but as a member of the Planning Committee I have to say it does not look good when a contentious or controversial planning application is heard and the response from the Town Council is 'No objection'. I know we have had this discussion many times before but saying 'No objection' means you have looked at the application and you DO NOT object to it. 'No Comment' means you haven't looked at it but I don't think it's clear whether anyone has looked at it does not look good at the planning committee when it says.....Well, usually it says 'No objection' and I feel that if the particular application at Starkholmes had been considered there is no way anybody on this Council would say 'No objection'. I might be wrong but I don't think they would have.

JK: Any comments on what Sue has said?

MF: I think there is a difficulty for some of us who sit on the planning committee (at the District Council (DDDC), and Sue who is Vice Chair. We could be compromised if we fill in the form and say we object as committee members have to remain neutral. Those here, that aren't on the planning committee at DDDC need to step up.

SB: Coming back to what I just said, if there isn't a comment then put 'No comment' don't send it in as 'No objection'. The DDDC planning committee were unanimous in their objection to it.

DF: Who else is on our planning committee? We have one but I feel we voted ourselves out of existence as we decided that going through every single application as a Town Council was seen as surplus to requirements. We decided, as a committee, that everyone would look at applications within their respective wards and sit as a committee only if there was a contentious application to discuss. I feel awful as I live in Starkholmes and most of my neighbours objected to it. Personally I don't object to it.

SB: Oh right.

DF: We need more housing. But living there doesn't help when it's not my ward. I did miss it however. Perhaps we need to revisit how the planning committee sits as we decided that if any of us saw something on the list we thought needed discussing then we would call a meeting.

SH: Everyone here gets an email every week which tells them what applications are in. I think that Diane has just demonstrated that the system works as she has said she had no objection to the Starkholmes application. So clearly Diane read it.

DF: Yes. I look especially ones in my ward but was aware of this one too.

PW: I don't feel I have the experience or background to say with any conviction that something is contentious.

SF: If you are a Town Councillor it's possible that you represent a different part of a ward when you are a District Councillor and sometimes you get conflicting views from members and I find that difficult. The latest one I can think of which is the one stop shop on Hurst Farm. We need to make responses whether we represent that ward or not. It is difficult for an officer to understand what the opinion is. Right or wrong, view points need to be sent.

SB: On the DDDC planning committee, where an application is in a Matlock Town ward it tells us that No comment has been received...

MF: No objection.

SB: No it states 'No comment received'.

SH: The Council has stated previously that if the Officer receives no comments from anyone then we respond with 'No objection'.

SB: I don't agree with that.

SH: I am aware you don't agree with it but that is what the current default response is.

SB: I do know that and to me it gives the wrong message. It looks to me as though the Town Council has looked at it and has 'No objection'.

LB: I sympathise with Pat. If one of us does make a representation, does it require speaking to a number of people in the area.

SB: If you have something to say you could email the whole council and tell them how you feel.

DF: We have a planning committee and if any of us want to discuss any application we can call on that committee to discuss it.

JK: I would like to say that I was made aware of this plan by a member of the public. I hadn't seen it as the tablet is an issue. I couldn't see the email from the Planning Officer as it was on here. I have handed my tablet in now and am using a different method to read emails. So anyway, I didn't see it until someone emailed me. Once informed I attended the site visit and I spoke to the residents and DDDC members. I was made aware of the issues and was told I could go and speak at the planning committee at DDDC which I intended to do but I was not aware of the 12:00 cut off for asking to speak and so was unable to. I sent an email with my concerns instead. It

was rejected due to the shale that the land sits on and potential landslides. I apologise.

SW: To be fair. It is all about consultation with the public. Do people here go and enquire at the location of the application and speak to neighbours etc. Does everyone know how to access the portal? It's very important and shows all the detail. There is a recent example of an application having 45 objections from members of the public and still 'no objection' from the Town Council which frankly, looks awful.

JK: We need to ensure that communication is working and we need to look at the wording of 'No objection' or 'No comment'.

SB: I have never agreed that the default position is 'no objection' as to me that looks as though we have looked at it and don't object. For me the default position should be 'No comment', as though we don't have anything to say which is fair enough.

JK: Would you like to propose the change Sue?

SF: You cannot propose that. A motion was taken that the Council would default to 'No objection'. In order to change it an agenda item would be needed. This does not have one today.

SB: Does anybody agree with me?

MF: It's difficult. In Darley Dale they hold a public planning meeting each month and because everybody in the community knows then they all turn up. It's always a full room.

JK: We do have a public planning committee on this council but as Steve says we need to use our common sense on which applications we look at.

DF: We have a committee, if the system isn't working then let's look at it again as if people feel we need to change it.

SF: We have talked about this many times. Sue has the same objection every time. I think however, it's straight forward. You get an application, you either approve of it or don't. There is no in between, no 'if & 'but'. That is what 'No comment' means.

SH: Objections also have to be from a material list of objections. You can't just say you don't like the colour etc.

SW: Snitterton Council, at their Council meetings always bring detailed information on applications to each meeting.

SH: Chair, we have exceeded the allotted 15 minutes for public participation and need to move on in the agenda please.

2416/24

MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Since you kindly put me forward for this role I attended my first engagement which was the D-Day service in Hall Leys Park with my wife Nicola as my consort. Thankfully the service went very well and was well attended. I met the deputy lord lieutenant for the first time. My chosen charity this year will be Golding Grange who look after adults with special needs and learning difficulties. They aim to use local facilities wherever possible and to help people live normal lives in their community. Currently Golding Grange are based on Cavendish road but cannot stay in that building and they are looking for new premises in Matlock. I first went there in my role as deputy mayor last year to judge the Easter bonnet competition and found it hard to choose a winner. The staff are excellent and I felt privileged to attend. I asked my local shop to donate cream eggs and they did so with a promise to tag them on Facebook. I also attended their sports day in Hall Leys Park. I also met with the 'bus improvement group' who have various grievances and would like us to post timetables on our noticeboards. I

proudly represented the Town Council at the Mercian regiment pilgrimage to the Crich memorial with my wife Nicola. It was such a privilege to be there with other County dignitaries. We also attended the licensing of the Reverend Katrina Jenkins, the new priest at St Giles.

2417/24

MINUTES

SF: I would like to mention item 5 in these minutes and the comments of Cllr Hughes regarding Hurst Farm. Although we look forward to any involvement with the community on Hurst Farm from the Town Council I really don't think he understood the seriousness of the gap that was created by a member of staff leaving and that was because we were very upset at how things were being handled on the project at Hurst farm both by members of the District Council and the Officers up on Hurst Farm and we had to have a change of personnel and that gap was not only caused by our actions but also developed by the actions we took afterwards. So it just read wrong to me in the minutes. I understood where he was coming from but without knowing the full implications of what had happened up there, somebody from the outside didn't really know the full situation. It wasn't pleasant but we took action and hopefully it will move forward now.

JK: Ok, thank you for that Steve.

Proposed Cllr Diane Fletcher, Seconded Cllr Pat Wildgoose

Resolution: To approve the minutes of the Full Council meeting from 18 March 2024, the Confidential minutes of the Full Council meeting from 18 March 2024

Agreed unanimously

Cllr Flitter abstains as he was not present

2418/24

BUS SHELTER UPDATE

JK: We have been asked to review the report. Any comments?

SB: I would like to ask how much this is costing us?

SH: What has it cost the Town Council?

SB: Yes what have we paid so far?

SH: Nothing.

DF: This is whether we take on the maintenance costs of the bus shelter.

SF: Do we really want to take this on when it's something we don't even want in the first place. This is ridiculous as the tarmac is already laid and will need to be ripped up and the fact that it is right next door to an upgraded waiting room where electronic boards can be displayed.

DF: We were seeking further advice I think about what would happen if we didn't take it on.

SH: Yes, that has happened and a few of us went down and met representatives from highways at the County Council at the site. I felt Councillors were reassured that it wasn't too big and that it wouldn't get in the way too much. The responsibility for the L.E.D signage would not fall to us at a Town Council. We would be responsible for the shelter only and would be adding it to our list of shelters we already maintain. Highways confirmed, absolutely, they will not build the shelter if we don't take on the responsibility for its maintenance.

JK: Can I ask a question about the shelter, I guess that they are using glass in frames or is it the metal mesh we saw in the shelters in Derby City?

SH: They will be using Perspex as the metal mesh is not approved for use by the County Council as yet.

JK: If it is vandalised or broken we would have to pay and that is my concern.

MF: As one of the people who went down I have to say my concern was the proximity to M&S and vandalism risk. I understood that the seating would be against the kerb and that it is a very narrow shelter. If someone is stood under the shelter of the car park at M&S entrance right now, once the shelter is in place, should M&S, or any future occupier choose to , they could block off the access to the existing shelter so that would be lost. Buses can't drop for prams and wheelchairs but they will be able to once the layby has been extended. I am unsure.

JK: I was told that the layby was supposed to be able to take in two buses in order to get them away from the Bakewell road.

PW: The bigger buses don't fit. I saw it today. The road traffic is still affected.

SW: The pavement has been raised so the drop is not an issue. This new shelter will be graffitied and it will be down to us to pay for the cleaning and any potential damage.

SB: I would like to know about the accuracy of the timings on the display boards.

SH: They should be accurate but are reliant upon drivers updating position when the automated system fails which means the timings are not always reliable.

JK: When I went to the bus group they are all against it.

SB: I think most people are against it and in taking on the responsibility for it the Town Council will not be looked upon favourably.

DF: Two things really. First I want to know what Simon thinks. Does it fit in with what we do anyway with other shelters? The mayoral authority is supposed to be taking responsibility for transport.

JK: I can't see why we can't use what we already have.

SF: The land outside M&S is District Council land and we lease it to M&S landlord. The mayoral authority will be looking at bigger projects and take a more strategic approach, not bus stops.

SW: Does it require planning? It is a permanent structure. I don't think we know enough yet. I am not keen to take it on. If we decide not to we need to be reasonable in our response however.

SF: I am going to move that we do not take it on.

SB: I second that.

SF: The reasons for because there will be a purpose built waiting room within yards.

DF: Simon, what is your view?

SH: If we took it on it wouldn't make a great deal of difference to our outdoor team, timewise or financially. However I do think where it's positioned it would be more likely to be graffitied. It's more public and that may cause us a problem. I also agree with Sue about the publicity aspect but bear in mind the flip side of that which is that the people who do want it could turn around and say the Town Council has 26 bus shelters already, why aren't they taking it on and that the County Council could make it publicly known that the reason there isn't a shelter there is because the Town Council refused to take it on. A local group created specifically for issues with buses don't want it and Cllr Flitter makes a strong argument that it's not needed. If we refuse I think we have legitimate reasons for doing so.

Proposed: Cllr Steve Flitter, Seconded: Cllr Sue Burfoot

Resolution: To reject the County Council request to take on responsibility for the Bus shelter

Agreed unanimously

2419/24

EPAYMENT SOLUTION

SH: As you know, one of the things we would like to do, medium term is to add an automated booking system for the rooms and part of that is for consumers to be able to pay for the rooms. Therefore we need an Epayment facility. RBS & Lloyds will not give us the facility as they require more transactions going through our account for them to bother with it. Around a month ago, Unity Community bank got in touch and they have set up a new partnership with an Epayment company and have offered us the facility. As an example of how this will improve efficiency each year our allotment holders are sent a bill and have to pay their fees. Around half last year came to the Imperial Rooms and pay by cash or cheque and the vast majority of those would have paid by debit card if we had this Epayment facility. Easier and quicker for them and also this would negate the need for me to take time out of my working day to travel to Chesterfield to bank cheques and cash. We will have to pay a fee which is around 1% of the transaction charge and a monthly fee of £25 which is not contracted so we can come out of it when we please.

DF: I am totally for it. Even buskers have this system now and we should pay any going rate.

SW: Would there be an extra charge to pay if we accepted Diners or American Express?

SH: Yes there would be but we do not have to take those cards if we choose not to.

SF: I am for it as well. Let's not forget the £25 fee is a marketing ploy so that they don't charge 2%.

SH: There is a portal that shows all the transactions so we can bring a report to show how successful it's been.

Proposed: Cllr Diane Fletcher , Seconded Cllr Ashley Orwin

Resolution: To ask the Clerk to go ahead with accepting the Epayment system with Elavon via Unity Community Bank

Agreed unanimously

2420/24

INTERNAL AUDIT

SH: This is really to let you all know we are ready for our internal audit which is happening in a couple of weeks' time. It would have been earlier but Harmony had some time off for an operation. I will report back at the next Corporate meeting how it went.

The Chair noted on behalf of those present that the report has been accepted.

2421/24

DERBYSHIRE DALES COMMUNITY ENERGY GROUP REQUEST

DF: It looks like the request is for us to waive the fee for the room for their meeting.

SF: Can I ask the Clerk where we stand on giving rooms free of charge?

SH: We talked very recently at Corporate about a request for a free room which was refused as that is our policy.

SF: Do we have an idea of attendance?

SH: We don't, no.

SB: Charities don't get the rooms for free.

DF: As this ties in with our green policy shouldn't we think about supporting this in some other way?

SW: We helped this group apply for their initial funding as a Town Council.

DF: We shouldn't make an exception, I agree, but some statement that shows we are happy with what has been achieved and recognise it as a good thing.

SF: How about a letter of support from the Town Council?

AO: We could also help promote what has been achieved through our website and social media channels.

Proposed: Cllr Steve Flitter, Seconded Cllr Diane Fletcher

Resolution: To ask the Clerk to write a letter of support to the group and to promote the group via our social media. To turn down the proposal for a free room hire.

Agreed unanimously

2422/24

WORK EXPERIENCE REPORT

SH: We had a work experience girl from Highfields two weeks ago and she was amazing. She spent a day with each of the office staff. She was polite, kind and confident. Good on social media as you might expect. Lily and her mum attended a meeting too on the evening of the Monday she was with us. The County Council no longer arrange work experience, it is done via a London based private company. We organised it very easily and we could do it every year if we wanted. It was a little on the fly but from now on we will know better what we are doing.

SW: I am happy to propose we do this every year.

JK: What about an outdoor work experience person?

SH: That could be done yes. We offered that opportunity this year.

DF: Can we publicise what we did?

SH: We can but have to avoid specificity regarding the identification of a minor which she was at the time.

Proposed Cllr Steve Wain, Seconded Cllr Marilyn Franks

Resolution: To take on a work experience person each year and to thank the staff

Agreed unanimously

Cllr Flitter left the meeting at 19:15

2423/24

CATERING OPTION REFERRAL

JK: The Events Committee have referred this item for Full Council consideration.

SH: It was noted by Cllr Knighton that when the White Lights event in the rooms took place a few weekends ago they didn't have a catering option and the Events Committee felt we may be missing out on a potential revenue stream. It is something we could offer on a non-permanent basis. My main concern with it is that you would need an extra member of staff, one who has a hygiene certificate and it would be in addition to a caretaker on the day.

JK: I feel that it's a good idea and would give us some extra revenue.

SH: We would need to have a hygiene inspection.

DF: Perhaps we could try it on a trial basis. There are start up costs.

SH: We could trial it without initial costs as we have lots of stuff from the last event we did.

SB: Who would do the work?

SH: We would need a new employee who is very flexible as it wouldn't be permanent or guaranteed work, or an existing member of staff who would need training.

SW: Is there a licence change for the rooms required and is there a cost to that?

SH: There is and it is factored into the start-up costs in the report. It's approximately £150.

AO: Is that one off or annually?

SH: Annual.

PW: I would suggest a trial of six months.

SH: The licence lasts a year if we purchase one.

PW: Then perhaps the trial should be twelve months.

SH: As an alternative, I have begun to talk to local B&B's, hotels and other local businesses about cross promotion and in order to expand the wedding offering we can provide. So for example if there is a wedding car company they could promote the rooms and we in turn would say that that firm is our recommended choice for a wedding car. There are external caterers out there we could use for that as well as this. They wouldn't be as reliant on our work as they will have other ongoing work.

Proposed: Cllr Diane Fletcher, Seconded Cllr Pat Wildgoose

Resolution: To trial the catering option for a 12 month period

Agreed unanimously

2424/24

COUNCIL PUBLICITY: Website, Social Media, Newsletters and news releases

SW: We should advertise the fact that we have had the work experience person here.

SH: The website needs updating.

2425/24

ITEMS OF INFORMATION:

Lions Letter

Proposed: Cllr Steve Wain, Seconded Cllr Pat Wildgoose

Resolution: To receive the item above

Agreed unanimously

2426/24

CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS

To move the following resolution:

'That in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted (in respect of the personal situation of an employee which could result in legal proceedings) it is advisable in the public interest, that the press and public be temporarily excluded and they are instructed to withdraw'.

Council went into 'Confidential matters' at 19:40

Council came out of 'Confidential matters' at 19:47

Meeting ends at 19:48



Simon Hosmer
Town Clerk

CHAIRMAN:

DATED: