

Minutes of a meeting of Matlock Town Council held on Monday 18 November 2024 at 6.00pm in the Imperial Rooms, Matlock

Present: Cllr Jason Knighton (Chair) (JK), Cllr Len Best (LB), Cllr Sue Burfoot (SB), Cllr Steve Flitter (SF), Cllr Marilyn Franks (MF), Cllr Ashley Orwin (AO), Cllr David Hughes (DH)

In attendance: Simon Hosmer, Town Clerk (SH)

Meeting begins at 18:00

2449/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Diane Fletcher – *In hospital*

Cllr Pat Wildgoose – *On holiday*

Cllr Hughes introduced the meeting to the public forum and asked each Councillor in turn to introduce themselves to the members of the public, which they then did.

2450/24 VARIATION OF ORDER OF BUSINESS AND DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

The Chair proposed that the order of business be varied so point 8 on the agenda could be discussed in this section as two members of the Matlock Civic Association (MCA) are present in the public gallery

Proposed Cllr Jason Knighton, Seconded Cllr David Hughes

Resolution: To vary the order of business to allow for discussion of point 8 on the agenda in the public participation section

Agreed unanimously

2451/24 REQUEST FOR DISPENSATION

None were received

2452/24 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC, POLICE, COUNTY COUNCIL OR DISTRICT COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES

Ken Parker (KP) from the MCA was asked to speak

KP: The last time this was discussed here was at a Corporate Committee meeting. I am here to inform the Council of the 3 issues that remain outstanding in regards to the partnership between the MCA and Matlock Town Council (MTC). First the MCA has been going for 40 years and we see a time when we wont be able to continue in the same capacity and therefore need to make a contingency plan. Second, around four years ago we, rather unexpectedly, had a bequest from David Barker who was mayor of Matlock three times of around £200,000. Thirdly, the monies are difficult to spend and remain at the same sort of level simply because trying to do the things we set out to do requires working in partnership with various different authorities and getting permission for certain ideas has not been possible. We therefore would like

to put forward the proposal that at a later date, to be decided, we put the funds into the Council's hands in a similar way to the Ernest Bailey Trust that is managed by Derbyshire Dales District Council (DDDC). In consultation with the Clerk we have gotten to a very detailed proposal following advice from the Charity Commission (CC). They won't consider the proposal until it's actual to be actioned and won't give advice until that point. They also suggest we speak to a legally experienced outside person to look over the proposal which I have already done, this was Neil Moulden of the DDDC Citizens Voluntary Service (DDDC CVS) and he advises that we register the MCA under the management of the Town Council and that members of the MCA are asked to act as agents on behalf of MTC to take projects forward. In this. The sole trustee of the MCA will become the Town Council.

KP: We therefore ask that a revised proposal with the process updated to happen immediately be approved, secondly that Council agree to the text update and submit it to the CC for approval. Then to approve the Clerk working collaboratively with the MCA on any amendments that are needed.

DH: I am all for this, especially the original two stage process. But even under the new basis suggested I am happy for it to go forward. We would need to confirm that we can co-opt current members of MCA onto that board.

SH: What we didn't decide at the Corporate Committee meeting was whether we would add this into an already existing committee such as the Environment Committee or to create a dedicated committee to meet and discuss this specifically.

SF: I think it would have to be a dedicated committee for this. We should do it, I am in agreement with the proposal. Let's follow the professional advice.

DH: Thank you for the 50 years of dedication and work you guys have put in to Matlock.

SB: We all need to give the MCA our support and thanks. The list of the things that have been completed by the MCA is impressive in the extreme. I have to remind Ken that I am named as a consultant in David Barker's will as someone who has to be asked about any new project.

KP: Yes indeed and as you know we have asked each time a new project has gotten to a certain stage. There are 5 of us in this situation and although none of us can veto an idea we must be consulted.

SB: How would that affect any vote I made on a new project at a committee dedicated to this?

SH: You would need to declare an interest at the time Sue.

SF: I would add to my previous point that although a dedicated committee would be a good idea we could just add an agenda point to a Full Council meeting to discuss this business going forward.

JK: Do we want to make a resolution now or wait until we get to the agenda point later in the meeting?

DH: I am happy to move the points as laid down by Ken as a resolution.

Proposed Cllr David Hughes, Seconded Cllr Steve Flitter

Resolution: To approve the process of moving the responsibility for the MCA funds and work to the Town Council in a formal capacity which may include a dedicated committee to which current trustees of the Matlock Civic Association can be co-opted *and* to approve the rewording of the control document in order to negate the two stage process as recommended *and* to ask the Clerk to collaborate on these items with Ken Parker to the satisfaction of the Town Council

Agreed unanimously

SB: In my capacity as County Councillor I would like to inform the Council about the latest developments in regards to the plantation at Starkholmes that was previously offered to this Council for purchase. It has since then, gone to auction and sold for £28,000 but I am currently unaware of who has bought it.

MF: In my capacity as a member of the planning committee at the District Council I wanted to make sure that MTC members are aware of the appeal for the Wolds site and that there will be a public enquiry in the local area, in person.

JK: We need to be seen to be involved in this as local feeling is so strong.

MF: The Town Council will be asked to make a representation as they have done so before.

DH: It seems other parish councils voice their opinions much stronger than we do. Perhaps we should be publicising more what we want to say, when we do say it. We are aligning with the Wolds action group. I will liaise with them and help with what is written.

Proposed: Cllr Sue Burfoot , Seconded Cllr Ashley Orwin

Resolution: Cllr Hughes and Cllr Best are tasked with responding to the Wolds appeal in conjunction with the Wolds Action Group by the 4th December 2024

Agreed unanimously

2453/24

MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS

JK: Since September I have been to several events and it's been a privilege.

22nd September I attended the Ashbourne civic service.

27th September I attended the Flood warden meeting here.

29th September, Wirksworth mayor had their civic service which I also attended.

30th September I attended a bus service group meeting.

6th October I attended the Bakewell mayor civic service.

18th October we did the Mayor's bingo night here and that was really well attended.

22nd October I attended the grand opening of the new Matlock Fire station

7th November I did the remembrance service at Matlock Bath which was a very successful event.

10th & 11th November I attended the Matlock remembrance services

16th November I attended the Ashbourne Christmas lights switch on.

JK: I have a few forthcoming events including opening Darcy house the new care home and attending Derby cathedral for a carol concert.

JK: I would like to have a discussion about the potential closure of our post office. I feel we should have a petition for residents to sign as it's disgusting that it may close.

DH: Chair, if I may, my understanding is that this will be a change of ownership and not closure.

SF: If the post office closes we would then qualify for a banking hub in Matlock.

MF: The post office here is a crown post office which means it's owned by the Royal Mail. They are looking to hand it over to a private company as over 8000 of the post offices already are.

DH: That would include, potentially, WH Smith if they wanted to take it on.

JK: The way I read it, it was going to potentially close. I think we shouldn't be seen to be saying or doing nothing about it.

DH: We should say, publicly, we are concerned with the potential closure of the post office

SH: If there is any more, firm information, we could start a petition.

SF: We should be careful what we say without having the proper facts. The closure of Lloyds bank will increase footfall into the current, already, often over crowded post office and so a true banking hub might actually be a better option for the Town.

JK: I agree with that but I am also concerned that other services they provide such as the passport checking service or driving licence applications will not be available to our non-internet using residents.

SB: How does a banking hub work in practice?

SH: Each bank that has a stake in the banking hub provides a representative on pre advertised days of the week for customer interactions. They also provide mortgage brokerage and other services on a booking basis and would meet with customers in the hub. Also there would be cash points for paying in and withdrawing monies every day it's open.

LB: Where would you buy stamps?

SH: Bridge news on the bridge or WH Smith

Proposed Cllr David Hughes, Seconded Cllr Jason Knighton

Resolution: To announce on our website that the Council is aware of the potential closure of the post office

Agreed unanimously

2454/24

MINUTES

The Clerk explained that the minutes are not ready to be approved yet and will be available at the next meeting in January

2455/24

LOCAL GOVT PENSION SCHEME REPORT

SH: There are 3 parts to this. Let me explain a bit more:

Since I joined in May 2023 MTC has been contributing to my pension, I have not, which I recently discovered. The monies paid in are there for me and have not been lost but I now need to make some contributions and they won't allow me to do so until MTC reaffirm that the proper officer roles should be enrolled in the scheme.

Additional voluntary contributions have been made to Amanda Wilson's pension pot, including for the last 12 months when we haven't been paying her salary or normal contributions. It's been on a direct debit to prudential who administer the contributions on behalf of Derbyshire County Council (DCC). £125 a month has been going out which we would normally claim back from the person's salary which has not been done as there has been no salary paid. I don't think we should try and claw it back from prudential, I think that would look bad. I have now cancelled that.

The Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) have written to us and told us they think we have not paid enough employer contribution for her. They say we are £6000 short but I believe they are not taking into account that she was not working for the last 12 months of the period in question. The person from LGPS I was due to meet about it was off sick but has now returned to work so I will be meeting him to discuss

that and other matters. My belief is that we owe around £1500 not £6000. I will report back to Council once I have a definitive figure.

MF: Do you not think it worth asking Prudential for the money back?

SH: I think that anyone can contribute Additional Voluntary Contributions to their pension and that we should separate this contribution from any we have made as a business. In truth it's our mistake and I don't think we should punish Amanda Wilson for that.

SF: We should move on from this. Let's not make the same mistake again.

Proposed Cllr Marilyn Franks, Seconded Cllr David Hughes

Resolution: To reaffirm the Council's belief that the proper officers of the Council and other employees of the Council should be enrolled into the Local Government Pension Scheme

Agreed unanimously

Proposed Cllr Steve Flitter, Seconded Cllr David Hughes

Resolution: To leave the Additional Voluntary Contributions for Amanda Wilson from with Prudential as she will benefit from the monies in her pension

Agreed unanimously

2456/24 MATLOCK CIVIC ASSOCIATION REPORT

This was dealt with in the public section earlier

2457/24 DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE 2024

SH: Cllr Hughes has suggested some amendments to this and I am going to take those and add them in. I didn't get them in time for this meeting.

Proposed: Cllr David Hughes, Seconded Cllr Marilyn Franks

Resolution: To defer the approval of the new disciplinary procedure to the next meeting to give the Clerk time to add the recommended amendments

Agreed unanimously

2458/24 SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY 2024

SH: This is a new requirement and is written by NALC with me adding some specific personalisation for our purposes. We need to adopt it and I will need to rewrite some other policies to include reference to this one.

Proposed: Cllr Marilyn Franks, Seconded Cllr David Hughes

Resolution: To adopt, as written, this as our Sexual Harassment policy
Agreed unanimously with the exception of Cllr Knighton who abstained

2459/24 LOCAL GOVT PAY AWARD 2024

SH: This agreement covers all staff who are receiving the annual pay award which will also need to be back paid. We have already budgeted for this.

Proposed Cllr Marilyn Franks, Seconded Cllr David Hughes

Resolution: To approve the report and the payment of any back pay
Agreed unanimously

2460/24 NATIONAL INSURANCE BUDGET IMPLICATION

DH: it's only a £600 increase.

SH: A bigger company with more than 65 employees would really see a big effect.

Proposed: Cllr Jason Knighton , Seconded Cllr David Hughes

Resolution: To Accept the report
Agreed unanimously

2461/24 COUNCIL PUBLICITY: Website, Social Media, Newsletters and news releases

MF: We have already talked about the post office.

JK: Has the website been updated.

SH: Some of it has.

DH: Could we recognise the work done on Denefields? The rangers too. Add something to social media.

SB: Perhaps write to them and thank them as they have taken on some of the sites we would have to be looking after ourselves.

JK: Can I ask about the website and how often it is looked at. Specifically the events page?

SH: The events page has been updated recently. Other pages are done when we can get to them. We could have a diary page which shows the upcoming events.

DH: That's a good idea or a scrolling down the page showing each item individually. This should be reviewed every week and should be predominantly forward looking.

Proposed: Cllr Jason Knighton , Seconded Cllr David Hughes

Resolution: To have the website events page updated weekly with what is to come
Agreed unanimously

SF: Could I ask what we currently do with Denefields. Specifically the top part?

DH: It is a rewilding section at the moment.

SF: As it is 50 years of the District Council and they are looking for land to plant 50 trees on. As it stands there will be a tree planted in central parks in the six towns of the Dales.

2462/24

ITEMS OF INFORMATION:

Proposed: Cllr , Seconded Cllr

Resolution: To receive the items of information

Agreed unanimously

2463/24

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 19:15

Council came out of ‘Confidential matters at 19:35

Meeting ends at 19:36



Simon Hosmer
Town Clerk

CHAIRMAN:

DATED: