



Minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Committee of Matlock Town Council held on Monday 19 August 2024 at 10:30am in the Riber Room of the Imperial Rooms, Matlock

Present: In the Chair: Cllr Jason Knighton (JK)

Councillors: Cllr Diane Fletcher (DF), Cllr David Hughes (DH), Cllr Steve Wain (SW), Cllr Marilyn Franks (MF)

In attendance: Simon Hosmer (SH), Town Clerk

Meeting begins at 10:30

CC414/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
Cllr Ashley Orwin – Holiday

CC415/24 VARIATION OF ORDER OF BUSINESS AND DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS
None declared

CC416/24 REQUEST FOR DISPENSATION
None received

CC417/24 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC
No members of the public were present

CC418/24 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING: Monday 24 June 2024
No two Councillors were present from the previous meeting so those present decided to receive the minutes but to leave approval to a later date

Proposed: Cllr David Hughes, seconded Cllr Jason Knighton

Resolution: To receive the minutes of the Corporate Committee meeting from Monday 24 June 2024

Agreed unanimously

CC419/24 FINANCE UPDATE: AUDIT & FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

DH: I went through the report and the updates to the policy seem to fit in well with the recommendations from the audit.

SH: Hence why I have written it that way. The audit is there for you to see. There wasn't time to have updated the financial regulations last year and I don't believe I

had the knowledge to have done so at that point either. The audit was much better this year and took much less time on the day to complete. The background work done in the office beforehand was around the same and I understand the things we can do to make it even better next year. We do need to update standing orders and financial regulations of the Council each year and the standing orders will be coming to the next Full Council meeting for approval. These new financial regs add a layer of checking and security to the work. I have also added electronic payments to the financial regs so that can be added to our portfolio as agreed already this year.

SW: Could you explain the 'balances carried forward' from 2023 £116,510 so that carries into the top box for the next year but that box says £106,599. Why the difference?

SH: The second figure is the 2024 carry forward so although similar figures they are 12 months apart.

DH: So we have bought forward £10,000 more than we would have done?

SH: £10,000 less.

MF: I was going to ask that same question. Doesn't that mean that our reserves will diminish if it carries on that way?

SH: It would do but we need to take into account that in the first year of these accounts we didn't make a VAT reclaim. That has improved the figures for this year. The £10,000 difference can be explained by 2 things: We made a large payment to the previous Clerk at the end of her tenure as we owed her around 140 hours of unpaid work. The second thing is the pay award to all staff which makes the rest of that up.

MF: Income seems to have diminished year on year. Is that Imperial Rooms bookings reducing?

SH: We paid £7000 less in the year for everything and we had a refund from E-on due to overpayment on the park electric meters.

MF: Oh it's paying out, not what's come in?

SH: Yes and the refund number comes off the total payments which is why it's reduced significantly. We also reviewed broadband provision and our PC's in the office. Those things have reduced in cost. Next Full Council will see my preliminary budget proposal which I am confident will see further reductions in our costs.

DF: There is a proposal in your report for one of us to come in and help with monthly reconciliations. I have to say I wouldn't be good at that.

SH: As part of the financial regulations we should be reconciling our bank accounts quarterly but I would like to do that monthly. The main reason for that is the sheer volume of work prior to the audit in February, March time. If we could reconcile monthly the work would be more spread across the year and we could see the position of the Council finances better at any time. In order for that to be totally transparent we would like to invite a Councillor to come and check those. I would suggest that if Cllr Fletcher does not want to do that then we ask Cllr Orwin who does his own accounts at his business and is just round the corner during the working day.

Proposed: Cllr Diane Fletcher, Seconded Cllr David Hughes

Resolution: To ask Cllr Orwin to come and regularly check the Council finances with the Clerk and to ask Cllr Fletcher to be the substitute for that work if Cllr Orwin is unavailable

Agreed unanimously

Proposed: Cllr David Hughes, seconded Cllr Diane Fletcher

Resolution: To accept the report

Agreed unanimously

DF: The report is well written and the ideas that have come out of it are really good.

SH: The lady who comes with Brian to do the internal audit, Emma, has helped a lot with this. She has a lot of experience and is a Clerk herself. She has been so very helpful in the last few months. We will need to have a separate resolution for the financial regulations if you are happy to adopt them?

Proposed: Cllr David Hughes, seconded Cllr Marilyn Franks

Resolution: To adopt the new Financial Regulations

Agreed unanimously

CC420/24 OUTDOOR STAFF REQUEST

MF: This is a temporary uplift in hours while the work is so intense?

SH: That's correct, yes.

SW: How long is his probation?

SH: 6 months.

SW: How can this speed up us approving his early probation pass?

SH: It can't. They are 2 separate issues to address. Approving the 5 extra hours a week and his early probationary pass. You can approve both, one or neither. It's a month early and Nick is already way beyond needing any help. Nick has run the outdoor team in Dave's absence for a day or even a week more recently. He has fit in straight away. This would require a meeting even if you approve it. I think it will be no problem for Nick if you don't allow us to do it early.

DF: so we need to decide on 2 things. Probation and additional, temporary hours. I am unsure of ending the probation early as it could be seen as a precedent.

MF: It's only a month.

SW: We should stick to our existing policy

Proposed: Cllr Steve Wain, seconded Cllr David Hughes

Resolution: To temporarily increase Nick Spooner's hours by 4 hours a week to 20 hours per week in order to facilitate the additional work that is currently required and to give the Clerk authority to revoke those hours when necessary but to insist on a full probationary period

Agreed unanimously

CC421/24 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY

SH: As per the audit, policies and procedures will be coming it Committees and Full Council over the next few months. This is the next one of those. The policy has been slightly rewritten from a grammar and spelling point of view. We are legally required to display this publicly on our website.

Proposed: Cllr Jason Knighton, seconded: Cllr Marilyn Franks

Resolution: To adopt the Freedom of Information policy

Agreed unanimously

CC422/24 HEALTH, SAFETY & WELFARE POLICY

SH: Regulations require us to have one of these and this is the result of my review of the policy and very few bits have been changed.

DF: Do we have a 'modern slavery' policy?

SH: I don't think we do.

DF: I feel that best practice would mean we should have one. I understand we have a small workforce but we should have that and a 'Maternity' policy and a 'Domestic abuse' one as well. Abusers can find abuses at work even if they don't know the home address. We need to ensure our staff don't give out shift patterns to anybody.

SH: I am totally happy to do that. I am also in the process of updating the 'Sickness & absence' policy too.

JK: Are staff given annual retraining on policies or on first aid, manual handling?

SH: We do stick to the law on those things, yes.

Proposed: Cllr Steve Wain, seconded Cllr Marilyn Franks

Resolution: To adopt the Health & Safety Welfare policy and to ask the Clerk to review and if needed, produce 'Maternity' & Domestic abuse' policies and bring them to this Committee for adoption.

Agreed unanimously

CC423/24 COUNCIL PUBLICITY: Website, social media, newsletters and news releases

SW: I don't think there is anything on this agenda that needs publicising.

DH: The website is up to date and the Facebook page is much more active.

CC424/24 CONFIDENTIAL MOTION

Proposed Cllr Jason Knighton, seconded Cllr David Hughes

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.

Agreed unanimously

Meeting moved into confidential matters at 11:09

Meeting returned out of confidential matters at 11:15

Meeting closed by the chair at 11:15



Simon Hosmer
Town Clerk

CHAIRMAN:

DATED: