

Minutes of a meeting of Matlock Town Council held on Monday 20 January 2025 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

2467/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Pat Wildgoose – Away

Cllr Diane Fletcher - Illness

2468/24 VARIATION OF ORDER OF BUSINESS AND DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

None were received

2469/24 REQUEST FOR DISPENSATION

None were received

2470/24 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC, POLICE, COUNTY COUNCIL OR DISTRICT COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES

SB – In my role as a County Councillor I have received correspondence from a gentleman who lives on Carr Lane. Asking for a grit bin. I have checked with the County and they will not provide a grit bin. They will move one from somewhere else but I don't think that helps. An additional request has been made by some folks who live on Cardinshaw road and I have spoken with Platform housing who will also not provide a grit bin. So is it possible for the Town Council to provide grit bins?

SH- Cardinshaw road is on the same side as the golf course off of Chesterfield road?

SF- Yes.

SH- There is one there already.

SB- Yes, the residents would like another one at the entrance to the estate. Can we and should we? The case for Carr Lane is stronger.

MF: I think we could provide them but it's the continuing facility of refilling them that is my issue. Who does that?

SH- We do.

MF: So we would have to do that?

SH- Yes. We have had 5 requests over the winter now and this is because DCC won't buy new ones or replace old broken or stolen ones. Some have been moved without explanation.

SF- This item requires a change of policy on the Town Council's part and that should be an agenda point. Once you have done that then this could be discussed as an option but the current policy says we will not buy grit bins.

SB- What does the policy say?

SH- Our current policy, as Steve says, is NOT to replace or purchase new grit bins. It states we will periodically fill up the existing grit bins we are responsible for but that is it.

SF- The residents up there know this at Carr Lane.

MF: Residents can buy them themselves of course for between £50 and £100

SB- Could you send me the policy Simon?

SH- Yes of course.

MF: New estates and new bits of road are more and more these days. It's not that expensive for the residents to supply these for themselves. How much do we pay out for refilling at the moment?

SH- That very much depends on the weather but as a rule it's approximately £600 a year to refill all our grit bins.

SB- Can we have an agenda item so we can discuss this at a future meeting?

SH- Of course. We could have an audit of all the grit bins and a review of the policy at the Environment Committee when it next sits.

SB- District Councillor Martin Burfoot has sent an email regarding the Town Council's response to planning applications.

SH- Yes I got an email from him. He said the same as you had already said at a meeting.

SB- Will he get a response?

SH- I can email him back of course.

JK- A few of us from this Council are having some planning training this week so hopefully that will help with responses.

SB- Training will not address the problem of saying 'no objection'

MF: No, but it may give councillors confidence to make a response. We need to see more of the public here at our meetings who want to discuss these planning applications. Can we advertise better?

SB: The response online to the Farley Moor holiday chalet development in Darley Dale. That states that MTC have 'no objection'.

DH- People should be seeing us as a Town Council so we can better represent them as Marilyn says.

SB- The wording 'no objection' has not gone down well I can tell you.

SH- It's the wording you disagree with Sue?

SB- Yes.

SH- None of our councillors objected though. We did not receive a single objection to send on behalf of the Town Council.

DH- We need to move on tonight. We need to make our planning meetings regular with an agenda of all the applications we wish to discuss. The planning committee is not meeting and therefore not making a comment.

JK- Simon has added planning committee meetings on the same day as Corporate meets on the new 2025-2026 calendar.

SH- Yes but Corporate would like to move to the evenings from May.

SF- This of course may be a moot point as we don't know what the planning system will look like in 18 months' time. We may not even be a consultee.

DH: In those 18 months we still need to do something. I move that we have formal Planning meetings on a date which is timely for a comment to be made.

JK- Current Terms of Reference for the planning committee say that it will only meet if one of the members asks for it to discuss something specific.

SH- As we have 2 members of the planning committee no longer as Councillors it might be an idea when you shuffle in May to make sure that Councillors who are not part of the planning committee at District are on ours and at that point make a resolution at Full Council, at the annual meeting, to either hold them every other month as we do now but on a more formal footing or to keep it as it is and have the chair or any member of that committee able to call a meeting. That would require a

change to the Terms of Reference which could also be an agenda point at the annual meeting.

JK- That sounds like a good idea. Let's move on.

DH – One last thing on planning. Ex Cllr Steve Wain is trying to find out if the Town Council will have an opportunity to speak at the public enquiry due to start in March for the Gritstone road, Wolds development. We would wish to if it's possible.

JK- Yes, let's make that happen.

DH- Sorry, one more thing. Should we discuss the plan for a unitary authority as there are plans being made, conflicting plans from the Districts & Boroughs and from the County Council. Parish & Town Council's will stay the same but our relationship with the new authority will need to be discussed in the future. Once the plans are formal we could have our say.

SF- The District & Borough Councils have a meeting on Friday with the Derbyshire Strategic Leadership board and a government ministers aide but we won't be able to attend as it's politically motivated and they won't discuss plans with Liberal Democrats in the room. I know how it works and I will get a report from the Labour group in person.

No resolution was made

2471/24 MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS

JK- We have had the Christmas light switch on and rearranged the cancelled parade. I also attended the Christmas day meal here and played Santa for St Giles nursery. I have organised a future charity bingo night on Valentine's night to add to the Mayoral charity fund and on March 16th my Civic service will be at St Giles church.

Proposed Cllr David Hughes, Seconded Cllr Ashley Orwin

Resolution: To offer our thanks to the staff who attend on Christmas day and to the volunteers on the day

Agreed unanimously

2472/24 MINUTES

Proposed Cllr Steve Flitter, Seconded Cllr Sue Burfoot

Resolution: To approve the minutes from the Full Council meetings on 15th July 2024 including the confidential minutes, 16th September 2024 including the confidential minutes & 18th November 2024 including the confidential minutes

Agreed unanimously

2473/24 RFO VACANCY UPDATE REPORT

SH- The reasons that Corporate decided to downgrade the post from an experienced role to a more trainee style vacancy was that when DALC saw the job description they suggested that bringing the salary down might attract someone who wants to learn and potentially be a longer term hire which we thought a strong idea in order to save money and to better reflect our recruitment policy.

DH- How will that affect your workload Simon?

SH- Whichever way we do this it will reduce mine and Mike's workload as one of the first things the new RFO would be shown would be the accounting software. We are aiming to have them in for the beginning of the new financial year as that will be the best time to learn the processes.

JK- I like the idea of a trainee but won't it be a lot of responsibility for someone so young and with no guarantee they stay on longer. I would rather have someone qualified with experience. They would be second in command so existing staff would have to answer to them. That doesn't seem right.

SH- The new job description doesn't include any management or supervisory responsibilities. That is why we can regrade the role lower and save some money initially. The role is already advertised and 16 applicants, none of whom have experience, have already applied.

MF: How many hours a week?

SH- It's Full time.

DH- Our Town Council has a responsibility to the community and one of the things we always hear is about a lack of opportunity in local government and the lack of training thereafter. We should be looking at this as an opportunity to, in some small part, put that right. I think all organisations should have trainee and apprenticeship posts. If we can do it, we should.

SF- Personally I would like to see 2 new Councillors doing the interviews.

SB- Are any of the current staff interested?

SH- Nobody has applied as yet but they know the vacancy is available.

SF- Newer Councillors doing the interviews might throw a new light on it.

DH- It should be a training role.

Proposed Cllr Ashley Orwin, Seconded Cllr Sue Burfoot

Resolution: To make this a training role and reduce the grading as per the report.

Agreed unanimously with the Chair abstaining

SF- It may be that we train someone up and they move on but to David's point that is us enabling that to happen and we probably should.

JK- I wouldn't have an objection if it was a lesser role in the office. I worry about the volume of monies going in and coming out and the responsibility we put on a person doing that.

SH- Ultimately it's you and I chair that are responsible in a legal sense. To properly train someone up will take 12 months and a commitment from the successful candidate to do the FiLCA qualification which we ask in the application.

SF- Do we, as a Council pay for FiLCA?

SH- We do

MF: Do we stipulate in the contract that the person stays with us for a minimum of two years so we get value out of the training, time and effort we have put into the successful candidate?

SH- It's not in the contract but it can be. Castle have mentioned that kind of stipulation is legally fine for us to add.

2474/24

CALENDAR OF MEETINGS

JK- Corporate have voted at Committee to change it's time to 6:00pm from 10:30am so that will be changing from May. Corporate suggested that Planning have a fixed date every other month but if a planning application needs to be discussed before

that we could add an agenda point at the next Full Council meeting in order for that specific application to be discussed before any deadline for comment. We can't have Corporate and Planning at the same time on the same date of course.

SF- I thought we were going to have Planning at 5:00 or 5:30 prior to the Corporate meeting?

JK- For those who work, getting here for 5:00 is tricky. There are several of us in that position.

SF- It's also not fair on the staff who have to attend evening meetings after having done a full day's work. Council meetings used to start at 7:00pm.

DH- Have the planning meeting at 6:00pm and then Corporate starting at 7:00pm.

AO- Who is on our planning committee?

SH- Len, Jason, Diane with Steve Wain who has left now along with Paul Cruise who also left the Council.

JK- Steve was chair.

Proposed Cllr Jason Knighton, Seconded Cllr Ashley Orwin

Resolution: To have the Planning Committee at 6pm on the relevant Mondays and for Corporate to follow on directly afterwards and to organise a new set of Councillors for Planning Committee from May onwards.

Agreed unanimously

SH- Would you like to make an additional resolution that covers having Planning applications discussed at Full Council if the next Planning Committee falls too late for MTC to make a comment on it. It could be 9 weeks between meetings.

Proposed Cllr Marilyn Franks, Seconded Cllr Jason Knighton

Resolution: To allow major Planning applications or applications specifically commented on by constituents to be discussed at Full Council as an agenda point if the application has a deadline before the next Planning Committee meeting

Agreed unanimously

2475/24

BUDGET REPORT & PRECEPT

SH- Corporate Committee have already approved the budget but it is here for wider discussion.

SF- 2.99% seems right. The District Council has done that as well.

DH- We have a County Council which is hard pressed for cash and they are looking to axe some services to try and meet their budget. One of those services could be the library. They are already talking about reducing the hours. There are various ideas being put about to move it from its current location. I am concerned about its long term future. We should consider taking on the library service in the future if it is at risk of closure.

MF- The current plans are to cut hours across the board. Even Chesterfield which is the biggest.

SB- DCC aren't looking to close any libraries at the moment. Who knows what will happen in the future and don't forget we may have a new administration after the elections in May.

JK- How would we budget for looking after a library service?

DH- We would need to increase the precept to allow for it in the future.

MF- The bus station idea for putting a library in seems like a good idea to me.
SF- That idea has been out to DCC under the One Public estate umbrella. The floor needs to be raised which would be costly. Will there be a press release saying about the 2.99%?
SH- Yes I can do that if you resolve for us to do so in the publicity section later on in the meeting.

Proposed: Cllr David Hughes, Seconded Cllr Ashley Orwin

Resolution: To approve the precept and the budget for 2025-2026

Agreed unanimously

2476/24

REPORT RE: EMAIL FROM REVEREND ANN ANDERSON

SH- The reverend Ann has told us that the Methodists will be leaving their current building and have several options they can look at. She would like to bring community groups into our rooms as the convenience of our location is paramount to them. The request she has made is difficult to fit in. We may not be able to fit them all in but we have looked at it and some may be possible. The worship on Sundays can't happen as it stands as we have a long term room user in there all day.

JK- I am happy to attend a meeting with you if you need someone. We should give them a preference if we can.

SH- We would also have to change the covenant on the building. This would stop us from having civil ceremonies in the building however.

SF- Since 1984 it has been that way.

SH- We made around £4500 in wedding bookings in this financial year and bookings we have already taken deposits for.

LB- Can the covenant only cover one room?

SH- No it covers the entire building.

SF- Council can't hold meetings in chapels and other certain types of buildings such as those that sell alcohol.

AO- Do you think she would be happy with some, not all of these things happening here?

SH- I think so. That will be what she wants the meeting for.

MF- The chapel on Chesterfield road is beautiful and underused. Parking may be an issue there.

Proposed: Cllr Steve Flitter, Seconded Cllr Jason Knighton

Resolution: To ask the Clerk to set up a meeting with the Chair and reverend Ann and to bring back to Council for a decision once request is established.

Agreed unanimously

2477/24

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

SF- The budget and precept should be posted on our website and the Mercury contacted to give them the option of publishing.

MF- Should we advertise Planning meetings more? We need more community involvement.

JK- And the RFO vacancy should be advertised as should the co-option of 2 Councillors.

SH- We do have someone who may want to be a Councillor.

Proposed: Cllr Steve Flitter, Seconded Cllr Ashley Orwin

Resolution: To publish budget and precept information

Agreed unanimously

2478/24

ITEMS OF INFORMATION:

Proposed: Cllr Jason Knighton, Seconded Cllr Marilyn Franks

Resolution: To receive the items of information

Agreed unanimously

2479/24

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 19:17

Council came out of ‘Confidential matters’ at 19:23

Meeting ends at 19:23



Simon Hosmer

Town Clerk

CHAIRMAN:

DATED: