



Matlock

TOWN COUNCIL

Mayor 2024-2025 - Councillor Jason Knighton
Town Clerk – Simon Hosmer

Minutes of a meeting of the Environment Committee of Matlock Town Council held on Monday 3 February 2025 at 6:00pm in the Riber Room of the Imperial Rooms, Matlock

Present: In the chair: Cllr Sue Burfoot (SB)
Councillors: Cllr Len Best (LB), Cllr Pat Wildgoose (PW), Cllr Diane
Fletcher (DF)
In attendance: Simon Hosmer, Town Clerk (SH)

Meeting begins at 18:00

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| ENVC 94/20245 | APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
<i>Cllr David Hughes – other meeting</i> |
| ENVC 95/2025 | VARIATION OF ORDER OF BUSINESS AND DECLARATION OF
INTERESTS
<i>None received</i> |
| ENVC 96/2025 | REQUEST FOR DISPENSATION
<i>None received</i> |
| ENVC 97/2025 | PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC, POLICE,
COUNTY COUNCIL OR DISTRICT COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES

<i>No members of the public were present</i> |
| ENVC 98/2025 | MINUTES
Minutes of the 3rd June 2024, 5th August 2024 & 7th October 2024 |

Proposed: Cllr Pat Wildgoose, seconded Cllr Sue Burfoot
Resolution: To accept the minutes of the meeting of 3rd June 2024
Agreed apart from Cllr Len Best & Cllr Diane Fletcher who were not present

Proposed: Cllr Len Best, seconded Cllr Sue Burfoot
Resolution: To accept the minutes of the meeting of 5th August 2024
Agreed without Cllr Pat Wildgoose as she was not present

Proposed: Cllr Pat Wildgoose , seconded Cllr Sue Burfoot

Resolution: To accept the minutes of the meeting of 7th October 2024

Agreed without Cllr Diane Fletcher as she was not present

ENVC 99/2025 SMART METERS REPORT

SB: Does anyone want to comment or make a proposal?

PW: I think it's a really good idea.

DF: Smart meters are the way forward.

SH: This should eradicate the issue of being over charged that we had with E-on last year.

SB: I am staggered at the amount.

SH: Nearly £9000 we were overcharged. In July & August of 2023, despite there only really being any money spent in November & December they took something like £700 each month. We did get the money back from them but it took nearly 6 weeks.

SB: I don't have faith in any of these companies.

SH: We will review the contract for electric in the park next year.

SB: Don't you need permission?

SH: We already have it.

SB: Has this been proposed then?

DF: Yes I have done that.

Proposed: Cllr Diane Fletcher, seconded Cllr Len Best

Resolution: To accept the report and instruct the clerk to have smart meters fitted on all our external electric points around the town

Agreed unanimously

ENVC 100/2025 DENEFIELDS Q3 REPORT

SB: What does Q3 stand for?

SH: Quarter 3. They make a report for us 4 times a year.

PW: I have a query here. What are the Hagrid steps?

SH: They are being built up next to the woods.

SB: They do a lot of work and the reports are always good. If everybody is agreed we should give them some thanks officially.

SH: It could be that Groundworks are struggling. I am not sure but recent changes in personnel make me worry for their future. They asked for a payment earlier than we would normally pay them. They would like to be paid quarterly in future rather than 6 monthly.

SB: The path is well used.

DF: Do we pay an hourly rate to volunteers they recruit?

SH: No, they recruit but volunteers are not paid by us, if anyone. It costs us £14,400 per year and that covers everything they do.

SB: If we paid someone to do it would it be cheaper?

SH: I am unsure but it would require a qualified person who could do the work, teach and maintain the volunteer network and who either has access to heavy equipment or we invest in new equipment. I assume somewhere historically the Council chose to use Groundworks as the other alternative was either more expensive or impractical. This of course could be reviewed if you wish.

Proposed: Cllr Sue Burfoot, seconded Cllr Pat Wildgoose

Resolution: To accept the report and write a letter of thanks to Groundworks from the Council

Agreed unanimously

ENVC 101/2025

ALLOTMENT UPDATE

SH: This is for price changes. We have 4 different types of plot. A full plot which all the plots were originally is now a large plot as some of them have been split either into two which makes two medium plots or into three which made three small plots. This has all happened over time and we need to audit them all again which Mike will be doing in the next month or so before the letters go out for price increases. The last type of plot is a starter plot which is the same size as a small plot but doesn't sit in a good location within the allotments. Last year when we sent letters out to all the allotment holders they were warned, with a year's notice that the prices would increase this year. The only increase this year are £5 on a medium plot and £10 on a large. To add to the report as well, some on the waiting list have been offered plots and have refused them so they may have gone to the bottom of the list. There may be more division in the future to increase numbers of plots. Patsi who is the secretary of the allotment society is meeting regularly with Mike and is really proactive. The society has recommended that we increase prices by the way.

SB: Is Dave Goodridge still the chair?

SH: Yes he is.

PW: What is this about Scribe in the report?

SH: The software mention is just for information. I am doing a bigger review of our accounting software for the whole of the Council accounts and this may affect the allotments as they can be controlled with the software. I will report back on that in due course.

DF: Going to the bottom of the list if you refuse a plot seems a little unfair

SH: It's our policy, not the society. We could review that policy of the Committee would like. 15 of the 28 people on the list are old Starkholmes plot holders. The reality is that the waiting list at Wellfields is the shortest it has been for many years.

Proposed: Cllr Diane Fletcher, seconded Cllr Sue Burfoot

Resolution: To accept the report and to approve the price changes

Agreed unanimously

ENVC102/2025

GRIT BIN AUDIT

SB: I asked the Clerk to add this to the agenda. After the first bad snow I had 3 separate requests for Grit bins. Carr Lane in Riber, Cardinshaw road, off Chesterfield road where we already have one. The third one was Treetops. The street is not adopted and so the County Council would not consider it. However, the policy at DCC is not to provide new grit bins anyway. At Cardinshaw road, it's Platform housing and I asked them, they will not provide them either.

SH: The one on Cardinshaw road is right in the middle of the estate.

SB: The policy of DCC may change in May, we will have to see. So we need to discuss this and determine if we could provide them as a Town Council.

SH: I was asked to look at this at Full Council and so I checked the policy which was resolved at Full Council in 2020 which states 'Matlock Town Council will no longer purchase Grit bins'. That hasn't been updated since then so we are also currently in a position where we will not purchase new Grit bins and the ones we have provided in the last two winters have been mowed from other places or replacements for broken ones.

SB: They are £175.00 for each Grit bin. I would suggest we look at each application individually. It shouldn't be something we just offer.

DF: Is there a way of people applying?

SH: Not as yet.

SB: These people have come to me as a Councillor so I think we need to, at least, consider this request. How would we assess the need for each one?

DF: There needs to be an open, transparent way of applying for residents and better understanding, by us agreeing criteria, of if you can get one. When residents see 'The Council' won't buy one it tends to be they put all Council's together and we get tarred with the same brush, though in this case we do have the same policy currently.

SB: DCC will refill their own.

SH: Yes and we refill ours that we own. DCC are telling people over the phone that they won't do it and to speak to your Town or Parish Council.

DF: We should review the policy.

SH: You need to decide how to change the policy and then ask me to write it up and take it to Full Council for approval.

PW: I am worried about the commitment we are making.

SH: You set the criteria and ask the office to decide so you don't need to decide on every individual case at Committee. Perhaps decide on a budget each year and then have a scoring system to determine the most in need each year until the budget runs out. DCC will always allow us to put them in, as long as we do it safely, send photos and keep records, which we do.

Proposed: Cllr Sue Burfoot, seconded Cllr Diane Fletcher

Resolution: To ask the Clerk to write up the criteria and a new policy to bring to Full Council for review

Agreed unanimously

ENVC103/2025

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

None other than the thanks to Groundworks already mentioned

Meeting ends 18:41