



mirfield
town council

Minutes of Mirfield Town Council Meeting

Held on: Wednesday 23rd March 2022 at 7.30pm

Held at: Trinity Methodist Church, 4 Trinity Street, Mirfield, WF14 8AD

Councillors Present:

M Bolt (Chairman), V Lees-Hamilton, M Sullivan, M Brown, S Naisbett, P Tolson, J Roberts, J Hirst, J Nottingham, C Mallinson

In Attendance:

Clerk: L Staggs

Public: None

Press: None

MTC371/2019 Chairman's Welcome and Remarks:

The Mayor Cllr Bolt welcomed Councillors to the meeting. Cllr Bolt reports that he received an invitation to a seminar along with former Cllr Burton, which he attended on hate crime and antisemitism. He reports that many councils have made declarations and that MTC can consider this at future meetings. He reports that Kirklees also adopted a similar motion to MTC on Ukraine and he was party to a talk from Ukrainian community in this area which was very moving. He reports several questions on social media regarding the Jubilee and reiterates the motion made by MTC that they will facilitate & support but not organise. Cllr Lees-Hamilton states she would not support a road closure on St Pauls Road. Cllr Bolt reminds Cllrs that a decision was made to purchase 5 Jubilee benches for each ward, Cllrs to decide where in their ward they should go and report to the Clerk so that she can order them. He reports that the official Yorkshire Day will be held in Keighley this year and that Ward Cllrs have had a request from the Muslim community, he has given them the Clerk's email if they wish to present at a future meeting.

MTC372/2019 Apologies For Absence:

Councillors to send apologies and reasons for absence to the clerk or chairman for approval

1. To receive apologies – Cllrs Kath Taylor, M Burton & J Hinchliffe have a leave of absence & Cllrs Keith Taylor, Guy & Connell sent apologies with reasons for absence. Cllr Bolt **Proposed** to accept the apologies Cllr Lees-Hamilton **Seconded Vote: All in favour**
2. To approve reasons for absence – Cllr Bolt **Proposed** to approve the reasons for absence Cllr Lees-Hamilton **Seconded: Vote: All in favour**

MTC373/2019 Declaration of Interest:

Councillors to declare an interest, if applicable to any item on the agenda including any pecuniary interests whether they have been declared on the

members register of pecuniary interests.

Cllr Sullivan Declared a Pecuniary Interest as a member & treasurer of MAGS committee

Cllr Brown Declared an Other Interest as a member of MAGS

MTC374/2019

Confirmation of Minutes:

To approve the minutes of the Ordinary Town Council meeting of 2nd March 2022 including payments of Nil. Cllr Naisbett **Proposed** the minutes were a true & correct record of the meeting Cllr Mallinson **Seconded Vote: All in favour**

MTC375/2019

Matters Arising from the Minutes:

To receive information on the following ongoing issues and decide further action where necessary

1. To receive an update on Mirfield Library and agree any action necessary – No update Cllr Bolt reported that the library was closed due to Covid numbers. Clerk to ask Carol Gilchrist for an update and thank her for looking after library staff and community.
2. To receive an update on Eastthorpe Gardens Tender from the Clerk – Clerk reports after the last meeting that she shared the Tender details on the website and Facebook page including Mirfield Matters. She reports one tender from a local contractor and urges Cllrs to ask local groups and contractors to submit before the 30th March deadline.
3. To receive an update from the Clerk on Lease Renewal between Mirfield Town Council and Mirfield Allotments & Garden Society due 31/3/22 for the 3 allotment sites – The item is left until last as Cllr Sullivan declared a Pecuniary interest as treasurer of MAGS. Cllr Sullivan left the room. The Clerk updates Cllrs on the situation. She reports that she has been in constant contact with the solicitor regarding the renewal of the lease but there have been issues that mean the lease will not be renewed on 31st March, as an agreement has not been made between MTC & MAGS. Subsequently this means that MTC has no lease with MAGS and as it has no agreement with the plot holders, in essence could evict them from the 3 sites. There have been issues around the rent increase, as MTC has asked for £1200 per year for the 3 sites. The current rent is £650 and has been set at this amount since at least 2007. The increase is a reasonable request and MAGS have now agreed to this. MTC has also requested that MAGS join NSALG or other body to protect the plot holders and provide Public Liability Insurance. MAGS are not in favour of this and do not feel that they need to join. Cllr Brown states she has had conversations with the Secretary in which she has listed the positives behind joining NSALG and hopes that the committee will agree to this. Clerk confirms that if MAGS do not join NSALG they have to provide proof of Public Liability. The main issue is that the appointment of trustees is fundamental to the capacity of MAGS to enter into a new lease with MTC. If trustees are not appointed then the lease cannot be completed, hence why there will be no lease in force after 31st March. We appreciate that trustees take on responsibility and the new committee are apprehensive to do this, however, this is not negotiable and without this and a new lease MTC can take possession of the 3 sites. MAGS have stated that they cannot consider appointing trustees until the AGM in September. In an effort to try to resolve this the Clerk, with approval from the mayor and advice from the solicitor has agreed to hold over signing the lease on the following basis: 1. That MAGS agrees to enter into a new lease with trustees within 28 days of the 2022 AGM 2. In the event that MAGS is unable to complete the new lease in accordance with item 1, possession of the property will be surrendered voluntarily on expiry of the 28 days 3. MAGS make payment of the agreed new rent with effect from 1st April 2022. Cllrs all agree that this is more than fair and that every opportunity has been given to MAGS to renew the lease

on the correct basis with trustees. Cllr Naisbett **Proposed** to endorse the actions taken by the Clerk and solicitor to renew the lease Cllr Tolson **Seconded Cllr Brown Abstained Vote: 8 in favour. Cllr Sullivan returned.**

4. To receive an update from Cllr Naisbett removal of Christmas Lights – Cllr Naisbett reports that the lights will hopefully be taken down this week. The contractor has had personal issues and has Covid. Cllrs point out a loose light by Tesco and Clerk reminds Cllrs that the lights should be taken down by 12th night circa 5th January.
5. To receive a report from Cllrs Naisbett & Connell on lamppost survey – Cllr Naisbett reports that they are waiting until the lights are taken down to carry out a full survey.
6. To receive a quotation from Cutting Edge Tree Services for £6000 for the initial works for Mirfield Riverside Project and agree any costs and action necessary – Cllr Bolt reports that he, Cllr Roberts and the Clerk met with the contractors to discuss the riverside bordering the allotments at Lowlands from Hopton New Bridge along the allotments. He acknowledges that there is just over £50,000 reserved for the Riverside Project in the accounts, so ample for the start of the project. Cllr Lees-Hamilton states that the last flood was the worst leaving behind lots of debris. Cllrs discuss Steanard Lane and the poor condition of the concrete fence and the plastic fencing that has been pushed into the road following the flood. Cllr Lees-Hamilton **Proposed** to write to Kirklees Chief Executive and ask what is being done about this by Kirklees Cllr Bolt **Seconded Vote: All in favour** Cllr Lees-Hamilton to send photographs of this area to the Clerk to enclose with this. Cllr Roberts **Proposed** MTC accepts the quote of £6000 from Cutting Edge Tree Services as a starting point to the Riverside Project & asks MAGS for a contribution following the resolution MTC329(3) Cllrs Nottingham & Mallinson **Seconded Vote: All in favour**

MTC376/2019

Finance:

To approve the following accounts for payment:

1. To agree payment of Clerk March Salary by Bacs
2. To agree payment of Clerk's Working Allowance by Bacs
3. To agree NEST Pension by Direct Debit
4. To agree HMRC March PAYE by Bacs
5. To agree payment of Monthly Zoom Pro at £14.39 per month by Bacs
6. To agree payment of £365 Yorkshire Internal Audit Services by Bacs
7. To note Monthly Budget to 28/02/22 – **Noted** Cllr Bolt noted that the balance for the year end was in excess of what was anticipated
8. To note Bank Reconciliation to 28/02/22 – **Noted**

Cllr Bolt **Proposed** to pay items 1-6 en block Cllr Naisbett **Seconded Vote: All in favour**

Clerk reported that the majority of the ringfenced £4600 in the accounts for the Neighbourhood Plan would have to be paid back to Groundwork at the end of March as not much had been done by the consultant for the NP and that only one invoice for £734 has been sent despite the efforts of the Steering Group to progress further.

MTC377/2019

Internal Matters:

To receive information on the following items and decide any action where necessary

1. To receive an update from Cllr Connell on Lamppost brackets and decide any action necessary – Defer as Cllr Connell absent
2. To receive Internal Auditors report and agree any action necessary from the report – The report had been circulated prior to the meeting and the Clerk addresses the points raised. 1. Clerk's Salary – the auditor is concerned that after agreeing in November 2018 to carry out an appraisal it had not yet been

done and that nationally agreed pay awards not properly applied. Clerk confirms that the appraisal form has been sent to YLCA and that they are in the process of assessing this. Their report should be sent to Cllr Bolt at which time MTC can discuss options. Cllr Lees-Hamilton stated that prior to Covid there was an Employment Committee that dealt with this. Cllr Bolt stated it should be a decision for full council and possibly look at engaging either Kirklees or an external HR company to set out an appraisal. Clerk to ask Cllr Connell if his business would provide a quotation for this.

2. Electronic Banking & Payment Controls – the auditor had drawn attention to the fact that the Clerk is using her own debit card to make purchases that cannot be made by Bacs or cheque and then being reimbursed. The auditor recommends that MTC apply for a debit card for the Clerk's use to comply with Financial Regulations. Clerk to contact the bank regarding this and also check purchases made for possible limits to be set.

3. Annual Governance Review & Compliance – At the Annual Meeting in May 2020 an amended scheme of delegation was adopted to allow MTC to continue with day-to-day tasks and payments by delegating to the Clerk including payments. The auditor recommends that MTC revert to standard governance especially around payments, where Cllrs should be responsible for agreeing payments and not noting them. Clerk confirms that as per this agenda, the Clerk's report has been replaced with Finance and Cllrs are now responsible for agreeing payments. End of report.

3. Cllr Bolt added an item to the agenda. To agree the receipt of Planning notifications - Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated a survey for the receipt of Planning Applications by Cllrs. It was resolved some time ago that Cllrs make comments/objections on applications within their wards and during lockdown planning was removed from the agenda. Currently the Clerk forwards all the planning notifications to Cllrs. Cllrs discuss the other options in the survey to decide which they would prefer going forward. Cllr Sullivan **Proposed** Cllrs sign up to receive planning alerts, which make accessibility easier and saves time Cllr Mallinson **Seconded Vote: All in favour**. Cllrs to sign up to Planning alerts from Kirklees.

Clerk asks Cllr Mallinson if he has had any luck accessing the Mirfield Remembers website that was paid for in 2020 to EJ Events. Cllr Mallinson confirms that he cannot access and will liaise with Cllr Sullivan for further advice. Clerk reports that the domain name and hosting was paid to EJ Events but MTC was not given passwords to access the site.

MTC378/2019

Public Question Time:

NONE

MTC379/2019

The Date Of The Next Town Council Meeting.

Date of next meeting **Wednesday 6th April 2022**

Time Meeting Closed.....**8.30pm**.....