



mirfield
town council

Minutes of Mirfield Town Council Meeting

Held on: Wednesday 3rd April 2024 at 7.30pm

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

Councillors Present:

M Connell (Chairman), S Naisbett, J Roberts, J Hirst, D Hirst, P Tolson, B Harrison, M Bolt, J Hinchliffe

In Attendance:

Clerk: L Staggs

Public: 1 resident, 2 x Friends of Mirfield Library, 3 x representatives Network Rail (TPU),
4 x Kirklees representatives

Press: None

MTC160/2023 Chairman's Welcome and Remarks:

The Chairman Cllr Connell welcomed Cllrs and members of the public. He reported that he had attended the Choral Society Spring performance and as usual was a fabulous event.

MTC161/2023 Apologies for Absence:

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

1. To receive apologies – Cllrs V Lees-Hamilton, M Hamilton, Itrat Ali, Imran Ali, S Guy, M Sullivan & M Brown sent apologies with reasons for absence. Cllr Naisbett **Proposed** to accept the apologies Cllr Tolson **Seconded** **Vote: All in favour**
2. To approve reasons for absence – Cllr Naisbett **Proposed** to approve the reasons for absence Cllr Tolson **Seconded: Vote: All in favour**

MTC162/2023 Declaration of Interest:

Councillors to declare an interest, if applicable to any item on the agenda including any pecuniary interests whether or not they have been declared on the members register of pecuniary interests.

None to declare

MTC163/2023 Confirmation of Minutes:

To approve the minutes of the Ordinary Town Council meeting of the 6th March 2024 including payments of **Nil**. Cllr Naisbett **Proposed** the minutes were a true & correct record of the meeting Cllr Roberts **Seconded** Cllr Harrison **Abstained** **Vote: 7 in favour**

MTC164/2023 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 Lamppost Banners and decide any action necessary

– See below

2. To receive an update on Planning Application 2023/93539 at location Land adj, Ledgard Bridge Mill, Back Station Road, Mirfield, WF14 8NZ and decide any action necessary – See below
3. To receive an update on appointing Planning Consultant and discuss future potential controversial developments and decide any action necessary – See below

Due to the meeting over-running it was resolved to defer MTC164(1,2 & 3) until the next meeting

MTC165/2023

Community:

To receive an update/discuss/note on the following items:

1. To receive an update from Network Rail on Transpennine Route Upgrade and decide any action necessary – 4 representatives of Network Rail TPU are present. They begin with a visual presentation informing MTC of upgrades to the line and Mirfield Station.
 - The whole route to be electrified
 - Double tracks from Huddersfield more reliable and quicker. £11m project affecting 23 stations along the route
 - Footbridge and lifts to be installed
 - 150m of track with a further 50m in place for future proofing (6-8 carriages)
 - A new cycle route through Memorial Park connecting along the towpath with Station Rd
 - 2025 Platform 2 will re-open, platform 1 closes and new entrance from Station Rd opens. 2025 Platform 1 to reopen. 2027 Platform 3 is removed. January 2026 brand new station

7.45pm Cllr Hinchliffe arrives. Following the presentation, Cllr Bolt states that there has been no consultation with MTC or Ward Cllrs. He states that there is a missing link in the Greenway from Church Lane and the former rail lines could have been used instead of the towpaths. He states Kirklees are just ticking boxes as in the adopted Local Plan there is option to connect the Greenway. Some years ago the Friends of Mirfield Station created a Station Masterplan that was accepted by Kirklees and train operators and the then Rail Minister promised a brand-new station. However, what has been submitted is inferior to Kirkgate, with no sheltered waiting room, no increased parking or facility for a food/drink concession. It is the only station with direct link to London in Kirklees and with no bus route to the station, people are driving and no car park to leave cars. Why cannot the land next to the station, owned by Network Rail be turned into a car park. Cllr Bolt also mentions the lack of notice given for road closures, which causes disruption along other routes. Very dissatisfied that Mirfield is not getting a 21st century station. Cllr Connell states that it is a great commercial opportunity to grow the town and could the old Jewson yard be used for parking possibly. Cllr Bolt asks if cycle storage/lockers can be put at the station instead of Sheffield stands for better security. Network Rail state that they will take all the questions and ideas back with them and look at the feasibility of putting gas/electric and water and also cycle storage and also will look at doing better with mitigation & road closures. They confirm a planting bed and liaising with MIB. Cllr Hinchliffe asks if the funding has gone or if these points can be considered. Network Rail confirm the station is in the early funding stage, could work with MTC and look at a possible car park and also covered waiting area, cycle storage and retail unit. Cllrs state that there are funds from Mayor Brabin for active travel and that the station needs to be sustainable and future proofed.

8.26pm representatives Network Rail leave.

2. To receive an update on Mirfield Library and decide any action necessary –

Service Manager, Area Manager for Hubs, Head of Local Integrated Partnerships & Service Director- Communities and Access Services are present along with 2 members of the Friends group. The service director states that the Kirklees cabinet has given permission to proceed with informal feasibility for library structure. This resulted in 3 actions: 1. Contact with Friends groups & offer conversation on library models 2. Speak with town and parish councils 3. Hold public sessions.

1. Desktop feasibility that the public can feed into, looking at Tier 3 for Mirfield, community managed model. This will still provide IT maintenance/new books & single point of contact i.e. Service manager who would give information of funding available to the Friends groups. Once this has been done it will then return to cabinet in Summer. Chair of Friends group states that she is at a loss why Mirfield has been put in Tier 3, how is Mirfield with its footfall etc in the same tier as the other 8? She reads the criteria out but is not sure if the answers she has given are good for the library or bad. Service director confirms that only Tier 3 was given to the Friends group as an option. Cllr Bolt thanks the Friends group for the work they do and the work leading up to the meeting tonight. He asks what matrix feasibility has been done for Mirfield to be in Tier 3 as this information was not included in MTC FOI request sent to Kirklees, also when asked for building maintenance costs, this was redacted in the FOI, how can taking over a building be considered if the costs are not given. He states that MTC were asked to set their precept by 15th February by Kirklees, however the information regarding the library decision was not given until 12th February, after the council had set the precept on 7th February, which did not include any provision for the library, MTC being the only group with funds for running costs. 2 out of 3 people recently given the Freedom of the borough are connected with libraries and reading. Cllr Bolt asked who made the decision to make Mirfield Tier 3? Service director states that the service expertise around library development and current models were used but if the desktop feasibility does not match what has been suggested then it may have to be looked at again. The decision has not been made, they want to explore other opportunities and suggestions. Chair of the Friends group states she was fearful it was a done deal but since conversations with the library services and feasibility study she hopes this is not the case. She states the volunteers are in their 70's & 80's and do not have the skill set to fund/manage the building, manage the library and look for grants and funding. Friends' member asks how Mirfield was put in Tier 3 when Batley & Cleckheaton are in Tier 1 and Cleckheaton is not in the centre or on a bus route? If library services had spoken to the Friends group before the decision, they would have known it was not feasible and it has caused a lot of upset with the volunteers. Head of local Services confirms that usually the running costs average £35k but last year was more due to the new boiler. She confirms that the £912,000 in library service saving would come into effect next financial year so that it would not affect the MTC precept this year. She states that a formal public consultation would take 12 weeks and then possible redundancies, so it would not be this year. Cllr Bolt states that a 21st century library needs accessible toilets, these capital costs are needed before decisions can be made and a further tax burden be asked of Mirfield residents. Cllr Hinchliffe asks if asset transfer of the building is possible and service director states it has been done in other areas so may be considered. Cllrs are concerned of the cost of running a building and staffing it with no commercial investment, needs to be feasible to take on a building. Cllr Naisbett states that in addition, MTC do not want to see library staff losing jobs in the current financial climate. Cllr Bolt **Proposed** MTC remain committed to exploring all options and opportunities involved in retaining the

library and library services within Eastthorpe Lodge Cllr Hinchliffe **Seconded**
Vote: All in favour The area manager for hubs thanked MTC for a very
constructive meeting. Cllr Connell stated it is the responsibility of MTC to give
residents the best facilities.

9.30pm Kirklees representatives and Chair of Friends group leave.

MTC166/2023

Public Question Time:

Cllr Bolt asked the property owner of the building occupied by Mirfield Market if
the illuminated sign could be removed. It was confirmed that it is in breach of the
lease and does not have relevant permissions to have this sign and he agreed to
get the sign removed.

MTC167/2023

The Date of The Next Town Council Meeting.

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 17th April 2024 at 7.30pm

Time Meeting Closed.....**9.32pm**.....