



Minutes of Mirfield Town Council Meeting

Held on: Tuesday 6th February 2020 at 7.00pm

Held at: St Mary's Community Centre, Church Lane, Mirfield

Councillors Present:

M Bolt (Chairman), J Roberts, P Tolson, K Taylor, S Naisbett, M Connell, J Nottingham

In Attendance:

Clerk: L Staggs
Public: Members River Stewardship Company
Press: None

MTC196/2019 Chairman's Welcome and Remarks:

The Mayor welcomed Councillors & RSC it was confirmed that there would be no recording of the meeting.

MTC197/2019 Apologies For Absence:

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

Cllrs: Hirst, Burton, Brown, Guy & Lees-Hamilton sent apologies. It was resolved to accept the apologies. Cllrs: Ibberson, Hinchliffe, Taylor & Benson were absent but no apologies received.

MTC198/2019 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.

None were declared

MTC199/2019 Mirfield Riverside Project:

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

1. To receive an update from the Riverside Stewardship Company on the Mirfield Riverside Project. To review the Project Agreement & receive information regarding the project – Clerk asks if the Ecological Impact Assessment has been carried out. RSC report that the officer they were dealing with at Kirklees regarding habitat mitigation has left. RSC member confirms that she is a qualified ecologist CIE, and that this is not required for the current project. The Wildlife Act states that action would be taken if a group were to deliberately and without due care and attention disturb otters and this is not the case with the project. If evidence of otters nesting is found then a license is required and this is not the case in Mirfield as evidence shows the otters are passing through. Cllr Connell is concerned that MTC has not had evidence to support this statement previously. RSC confirm that

all these tests are done automatically in the background by them when a project starts. 7.18pm Cllr Naisbett arrives. RSC have designed the project for Mirfield which is new for them as most councils already have designs in place. She confirms that each tree has a risk assessment as part of the standard operation so it is not written into every proposal. WYJS ecological service provide data FOC & update RSC accordingly. Cllr Bolt asks which statutory body is responsible for enforcing legislation. It is confirmed that Natural England oversee regulations. RSC to send email from Kirklees officer prior to him leaving to confirm he was happy with the ecological assessment from RSC regarding otters. RSC confirm that the 'Wildlife & Crimes Act' was to protect otters when they were in decline and they became protected. Now they are in abundance and therefore the law stands for persecution of otters by the fisheries not environment groups. Clerk asks for clarification of RSC indemnity email. RSC confirms that their own insurance indemnifies them if a claim is made and not MTC insurance, as long as MTC follow the best practices and recommendations from RSC. Cllr Bolt asks RSC to send an indemnity statement confirming this.

2. To resolve to exclude public and press to allow discussion of financial and contractual information which is commercially sensitive – No public in attendance. Cllrs, Clerk & RSC review the Project Agreement & discuss all items within the draft. Cllr Bolt states the primary contact to be changed to the Clerk as members of committees and outside bodies are reviewed annually at the council annual meeting, so could change. RSC to send an updated schedule for the costs MTC are responsible for, following the deletion of Kirkburton & Kirklees land from the project. MTC to review funding every 3 months. RSC confirm that when they are doing work on the riverbank, they put laminate signs on the trees and lampposts to notify as many people as possible when work is being done. Cllrs ask that RSC use local contractors and suppliers wherever possible. RSC to send quotations to Clerk in time for first agenda and invoices in time for second agenda. RSC confirm that none of the trees along the riverbank have TPO's. They also confirm that Saturday working is the same rate as weekday and that all community engagement officers are DBS checked, first aiders and fully qualified. Cllr Bolt **Proposed** that subject to the amendments to the agreement, Clerk delegated to sign off agreement with RSC when completed Cllr Naisbett **Seconded Vote: All in favour.**
3. To discuss the next course of action with River Stewardship Company – Cllr Bolt **Proposed** to accept the Draft Project Proposal as a working document Cllr Roberts **Seconded Vote: All in favour** Cllr Bolt asks for confirmation regarding the use of boats and time management for the removal of debris. RSC confirms that a floating platform and 2 boats are used, with a shuttle boat using access & egress points to remove debris as identified, RSC avoid removal of organic debris where possible. RSC confirms that the removal of debris is easier in the winter months as it is more visible with bare branches etc. Cllr Bolt states that debris can never be stopped accumulating but would be better managed in winter. He asks about crown lifting. RSC confirm that this is best done before the end of March so we are now running out of time to do this, but they will look at some volunteer days in Summer to deliver this. They are unable to remove main bulk but will look to improve Mirfield In Bloom route. RSC reported that Mirfield Waterways had pledged support & attended the community day and had been talking to residents about initiatives. Many groups have pledged support but as yet no money has been reimbursed to MTC. RSC state that companies and groups are more likely to buy in to the project with levels of buy in i.e. Gold, Silver, Bronze and buy into the larger project rather than reimburse MTC. RSC to look at Business

Buy In framework. Cllr Tolson **Proposed** MTC pays the outstanding November invoice at the next meeting Cllr Taylor **Seconded Vote: All in favour**

4. To resolve to exclude River Stewardship Company, public & press to discuss confidential & sensitive matters – Not required.
5. To conclude discussion and decide a course of action - RSC to produce a plan for the next 6 months costs, produce a template making sure MTC shown as lead on the project. Provide a feedback log from Facebook posts that MTC are the main underwriter of the project.

MTC200/2019

The Date Of The Next Town Council Meeting:

Date of next meeting **Thursday 18th February 2020**

Time Meeting Closed.....**9.00pm**.....