



Minutes of Mirfield Town Council Meeting

Held on: Wednesday 17th February 2021 at 6.30pm

Held at: Remotely via Zoom

Councillors Present:

M Bolt (Chairman), J Roberts, M Connell, Kath Taylor, V Lees-Hamilton, Keith Taylor, J Hirst, S Guy, M Brown, P Tolson, J Nottingham

In Attendance:

Clerk: L Staggs

Public: None (Members in waiting room failed to comply with disclaimer)

Press: None

MTC258/2019

Chairman's Welcome and Remarks:

The Mayor Cllr Bolt welcomed Councillors to the remote meeting. Clerk confirmed the remote meeting was quorate. Clerk updates on outstanding items. Outstanding code of conduct complaint – No update from Kirklees received. Gilder Hall land & grant application – Clerk reads email from treasurer MCT. Trees have been cut down near the electric wire, no immediate need for the wall to be taken down or reduced. Regarding the land at Gilder & possible transfer to MTC – MCT state that the land cannot be passed to MTC, stating that MCT never had the intention of selling the land for development and Cllrs were ill informed of this. MCT looking to enhance the land as a community asset. Clerk reminds Cllrs that the possible sale of land was noted by MCT in the grant application that MTC received for the wall & suggested by the trustees as the land was draining reserves allocated for the community centre.

Cllr Bolt reports that a former Mirfield Cllr & Town Mayor (92-93) has passed away and will be sadly missed. Cllrs take a minutes silence. Cllr Bolt reports that a message of condolence had been sent to the family of Cpt Sir Tom Moore who recently passed away.

Cllr Bolt reports that the Clerk has been receiving correspondence from MAGS regarding a plot termination and other subjects since December. Cllr Brown declares a Personal Interest as a member of MAGS. He reads a statement to Cllrs. I will now present an update on recent events and correspondence and set out for clarity and the avoidance of doubt the processes of the town council and the Town Mayor's role. Correspondence was received from Mirfield Allotment and Gardens society in December, who asked to meet myself. The Clerk replied and explained the situation that the town Mayor has no delegated authority to commit the council, and that where we have representatives on outside bodies or in the case of the allotments, liaison members they are elected and appointed by full council at an annual meeting, any issues should be discussed with those members and through them if needed an agenda item raised if a decision was needed. The Clerk

also clarified, as concerns had been expressed that our members did not have any Declarable Pecuniary interests which affected their ability or position. On 18 January we received a letter from MAGS saying that as we had concluded that there was no conflict of interest and the 2 members would remain as liaison officers without discussion with them there is no point in holding the suggested zoom meeting with the liaison officers. It seems strange for MAGS to say a meeting was denied when in fact they were directed to those most appropriate for such a meeting. To be absolutely clear I will not be discussing any allegations or intimations about elected members of this council in a meeting to which they are not invited, the town mayor is not the monitoring officer for this council and has no delegated disciplinary role. The role of one of our liaison members was further questioned, asking about the authority and capacity for actions. The position was clearly set out that the Councillor and indeed all members are encouraged and free to act as an advocate for the community. Cllrs do not require authority direct from Full Council unless their actions require funding or seek to create a policy position for the council. We feel that it is unrealistic, especially in the current circumstances, to expect 16 councillors to request Full Council sanction in the support of residents who seek their help, as this would delay their response and could adversely affect those residents and their circumstances. In this case the councillor was acting on behalf of a resident, by acting as a mediator between MAGS and a resident which seems perfectly reasonable. The Clerk then directed MAGS to the Role Profile of a Town Councillor which is available to view on the website. I would add that such advocacy work is entirely in keeping with the oath or declaration of office we all took as Councillor

DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE OF COUNCILLOR

I, _____
having been elected to the office of _Town Councillor of Mirfield Town Council declare that I take that office upon myself, and will duly and faithfully fulfil the duties of it according to the best of my judgement and ability. I undertake to observe the code as to the conduct which is expected of members.

To conclude, I would like to thank our liaison members for the allotments for their work and to extend that thanks to all members for the work they have been doing on behalf of our community.

MTC259/2019

Apologies For Absence:

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

1. To receive apologies – Cllr Naisbett sent apologies. Cllr Burton has an extended leave of absence.
2. To approve reasons for absence – Cllr Bolt **Proposed** to accept the apologies and reasons for absence **Seconded: Cllr Guy Vote: All in favour**

Cllr Hinchliffe was absent but sent no apologies or reasons for absence.

MTC260/2019

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.

MTC258 Cllr Brown declared a personal interest as a plot holder at Nab Lane allotments and member of MAGS.

MTC261/2019

Confirmation of Minutes:

To approve the minutes of the Ordinary Town Council meeting of 11th November 2020 including payments of Nil. Cllr Guy **Proposed** the minutes were a true & correct record of the meeting Cllr Lees-Hamilton **Seconded**

Vote: All in favour

To approve the minutes of the Extraordinary Town Council meeting of 2nd December 2020 including payments of Nil. Cllr Bolt **Proposed** the minutes were a true & correct record of the meeting Cllr Lees-Hamilton **Seconded**

Vote: All in favour

MTC262/2019

Mirfield Matters:

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

1. To receive a programme of works from Riverside Stewardship Company for 2020/2021 and agree quotation of £625 December, £4170 January & £6147 February (Circulated via email prior to the meeting) – The item was taken after Finance. Clerk updates on the current quotations and situation with RSC. Cllr Bolt states that local trades people, like tree surgeons should be used. He is concerned that local businesses and landowners have not been contacted still by RSC and that these landowners may have allocated finance elsewhere like MIB. High turnaround of colleagues and point of contact keeps changing and not sure if the project is living up to what was agreed. Cllrs concerned at the high cost of PPE on the quotations considering that sub-contractors should provide their own. RSC are relying on MTC to fund and not looking for grants or other means to finance. Cllr Bolt reiterates that MTC agreed to underwrite not fund and that RSC should be looking to landowners, Kirklees and grants. 7.34pm no longer members of public in the waiting room. Clerk sent several chats to ask for full names and reason for attendance as per disclaimer. Cllr Bolt **Proposed** to hold all quotes and invoices until the Clerk can do due diligence and get appropriate answers regarding grants, funding and use of local trades people Cllr Brown **Seconded** **Vote: All in favour**
2. To receive a motion from Cllr Bolt “Walkers Welcome” following recently circulated email – Cllr Bolt **Proposed** MTC supports Walkers are Welcome initiative, to investigate & support, including walking initiatives, production of paper maps and possible costings. Liaise with other Town & Parish councils to progress PROW, improve accessibility and promote walking. Walkers Welcome is a national initiative and MTC should endorse as they did with Heroes Welcome. **Seconded Cllr Lees-Hamilton** **Vote: All in favour** Cllrs mention local walking groups and the lack of accessible footpaths and the possibility of working with community groups. Also, during lockdown more people have taken to walking as a means of exercise. Walking guides could be developed over time and be easily accessible.

MTC263/2019

Finance:

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

1. To note the following decisions made between meetings by the Clerk under Delegated Powers as agreed in the Full Council Meeting 12th May 2020:
 - Payment of Wild About Gardens Bankfield Hedges £180.00
 - Payment of Clerk Salary, Working Allowance, NEST Pension & HMRC for November, December & January
 - Payment of Just Gardens Maintenance of Eastthorpe Gardens November – February £160.00
 - Payment of PKF Littlejohn External Audit £480.00
 - Payment of Ben Hardcastle Installation Lights £2750
 - Payment of Monthly Zoom cost for Pro Nov – Feb £57.56
 - Payment of Stationary £13.36

- Preparation & costs associated with Remembrance Service (Armistice Committee Approval) £244.68
- Payment of Limitless Graphics Signage £1344.00
- Payment of D Gluck Consultant Fees N Plan £1724.00
- Payment of Wreaths from RBL £50.00
- Payment of Go Daddy Website Renewal £168.61
- Receipt of Groundwork Grant N Plan £4786.00
- Receipt of Kirklees contribution VE75 Events £5000

Items paid under delegated powers noted. Cllr Bolt reported that Kirklees had agreed to pay £5000 towards the cost of the VE Event as it was the only one to be held in Kirklees, so they agreed to partner with MTC.

2. To discuss and approve 2021/2022 Budget – Cllr Bolt reported that the budget had been prepared by the Clerk/RFO and was financially sound. Cllrs had been asked if any items were to be added but none received. Columns 1-4 to remain as per 2020/2021. Column 5 to remain but if required could be increased from regen. Column 6 to include Civic Events and reduce due to lack of events in pandemic & still monies in reserves. Column 7 Walkers Welcome as per previous motion. Column 8 to remain same and Column 9 to reduce due to cancelled events. Column 10 increased to include defibrillators, hanging baskets & neighbourhood watch. Column 11 reduce as still 25k in reserves but may need if consultants or representation is required to challenge planning and the planting of trees. Column 12 nil as £34k reserves prudently allocated from previous budgets. If a By-election were to be called, would have to tax residents the following year. Cllr Bolt **Proposed** a Total budget of £117,000.00 and thanked the Clerk for sound financial management preparing the budget Cllr Brown **Seconded Vote: All in favour** Cllr Lees-Hamilton stated it was giving value to residents and thanked the Mayor and the Clerk.
3. To discuss and approve 2021/2022 Precept – Cllr Bolt reports Following the year of lockdown and lack of events due to Covid and prudent management, the council has reserves and with no immediate drawdown has £300k in the accounts. £76k rollover from 2020/2021 and £96k ringfenced for Mirfield Riverside Project, however this was only to be underwritten with contributions from grants and landowners. At the present time, Mirfield residents may have been furloughed or lost their jobs and have a shortage of finances, MTC could look at funding the 2021/2022 budget without setting a precept and taxing residents. If the precept were to be set at £117,000.00 this would result in Band D tax of £17.70. Kirklees have increased by 5%. Kirkburton Band D set at £15.73, Denby Dale set at £26.00, Holme Valley set at £27.18 & Meltham set at £48.68. Cllr Bolt **Proposed** in light of the level of reserves and current financial circumstances of residents, that MTC do not set a precept for this year Cllr Lees-Hamilton **Seconded Vote: All in favour** Cllr Guy stated it was a fantastic way to demonstrate how to run a budget & set out the coming year.

MTC264/2019

Planning:

To receive an update on major planning applications.

Cllr Bolt confirms that any other planning applications should be dealt with by Ward councillors.

Mirfield 25 – Cllr Bolt reports that that after 18 months of mud on the street, the site has now got a car park and road sweeper. He reports that the drains to Whitegate cross a culvert into a stream which then enters the Calder, any pollution from the site is making its way into the watercourse. Kirklees insisted that wheels be cleaned on leaving the housing site but not the retail

development.

Granny Lane – the development of 67 houses has gone back to strategic planning. The houses are not being built to size and standard of guidance so has been deferred.

Old bank Road – Back as outline planning for 63 houses, needs looking into as the land may still be contaminated. Previous objecting comments to be sent to Kirklees. Mirfield Health Centre primary catchment but no additional funding for extra impact of all these extra houses.

MTC265/2019

Internal Matters:

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

1. To update on Casual Vacancy & Co-option of Cllrs for Crossley & Battyeford Ward -Cllr Bolt reports that he has received the resignation from Cllr Ibberson as he and his family are moving away from the area. Still on-going casual vacancy for Crossley ward. Clerk to send thanks to Cllr Ibberson for his service as a Cllr and former Mayor and his community service over the years.
Clerk to notify Kirklees of Casual Vacancy. If a By-election called it will have to be paid from reserves.

MTC266/2019

Public Question Time:

None

MTC267/2019

The Date Of The Next Town Council Meeting.

Date of next meeting **TBC**

Time Meeting Closed.....**7.45pm**.....