



mirfield
town council

Minutes of Mirfield Town Council Meeting

Held on: Wednesday 7th February 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, B Harrison, P Tolson, M Brown, M Sullivan, S Guy

In Attendance:

Clerk: L Staggs
Public: 3 residents
Press: None

MTC134/2023

Chairman's Welcome and Remarks:

The Chairman Cllr Connell welcomed Cllrs and members of the public. He reported that he had attended Saddleworth Civic Dinner and had a very pleasant evening. He also reported attending the Mirfield Rotary Club Coronation Tree Planting and Deputy Lord Lieutenant was also in attendance. He also reported attending the Memorial Service at Hartshead Moor for the 50th Anniversary M62 coach bombing along with other Civic leaders, WYP and victims' families.

MTC135/2023

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 & M Bolt sent apologies with reasons for absence. Cllr Naisbett **Proposed** to accept the apologies Cllr Guy **Seconded Vote: All in favour**
2. To approve reasons for absence – Cllr Naisbett **Proposed** to approve the reasons for absence Cllr Guy **Seconded: Vote: All in favour**
Cllr Hinchliffe was absent but did not send apologies

MTC136/2023

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.

Cllr Guy declared an other interest MTC138(2)

MTC137/2023

Confirmation of Minutes:

To approve the minutes of the Ordinary Town Council meeting of the 17th January 2024 including payments of **£125.00 plus Clerk Salary, pension & HMRC**. Cllr Naisbett **Proposed** the minutes were a true & correct record of the meeting Cllr Harrison **Seconded Vote: in All favour**

MTC138/2023

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 Christmas Lights 2024, discuss & decide any action or costs necessary – Cllr Naisbett reports that he has set up a WhatsApp group for Cllrs and residents to get involved with 2024 switch on.
2. To receive an update on Mirfield Library & Changing Places funding and decide any action necessary – Clerk had circulated an email from Cllr Ramsay regarding the withdrawal of funding for Mirfield Library. Cllrs discuss that all the other Changing Places toilet funding had gone ahead except Mirfield and Dewsbury Market, however Dewsbury Market was only due to re-profiling the current plans, and is likely to go ahead when this is completed, leaving Mirfield out of crucial funding. Mirfield being the only town listed in the funding not to already have public toilets. Civic Centre 1, Slaithwaite Civic Hall, Greenhead Park & Oakwell Hall and Country Park already having facilities but still gaining the Changing Places funding, Cllrs wonder if the cost of both labour and materials has not increased exponentially in these areas as in Mirfield, this being the excuse given by Cllr Ramsay. Cllr Connell **Proposed** Clerk emails Cllrs Ramsay & Turner and Kirklees and ask the questions noted above and stating the Cllrs are disappointed that yet again Mirfield has been left without access to disabled and public toilets Cllr Tolson **Seconded Vote: All in favour**
3. 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 – Clerk confirms submitting a holding objection.
4. To receive an update on appointing Planning Consultant and discuss future potential controversial developments and decide any action necessary - Clerk reports that she has contacted a planning consultant but he feels there may be a conflict of interest, so he has referred her to someone else.

MTC139/2023

Internal Matters:

To receive information on the following and decide any action necessary

1. To discuss the potential of a new Mirfield Town Council website and agree any action necessary – Cllrs agree that the website needs improving and using as previously discussed as a community website and include Mirfield Remembers. Look at a further presentation from Novus and also source quotes from other local companies like Fishtank.
2. To discuss and approve 2024/2025 Budget – Budget spreadsheet is circulated with Cllrs. Clerk presents the 2024/2025 draft budget and addresses each column.
 - 1) **Admin** – Propose to increase to £9500 to take into account general price increases
 - 2) **Wages** – Propose to increase to £22,000 taking into account salary increase during 2024/2025 and possible increase by NJC Salary scales.
 - 3) **Chairman's Allowance** – Propose to leave at £1000
 - 4) **Eastthorpe Gardens** – Propose to increase to £1500 to cover any costs of changing the flagged area that the bench was on into a flower bed.
 - 5) **Christmas Lights** – Propose to increase to £13,000 to cover Christmas Tree and any additional lighting that may be required. Also, Kirklees may withdraw the festive lighting grant, so need to be covered
 - 6) **Civic & Cultural Events** – Propose to increase to £15,000 as MTC now paying full costs for Remembrance Parade and the spiralling costs from the previous year need to be covered. Last year Cllr Connell arranged a Civic Service, that was well received and is looking to arrange a Civic Dinner, as MTC receives invites from other councils but does not reciprocate, this is a way of getting back in the Civic scene. Clerk also recommends increasing the Civic Reserves to £20,000 to cover any D-day 80 events.
 - 7) **Grants & Match funding** – Propose leave at £15,000 but encourage new

groups to apply for funding as this year there is a substantial amount still left in this column

8) **Grants & Community Events** – Propose to change heading to Grants & Community Events as these are events that local groups arrange but must still be applied for via the grant scheme. Propose to increase to £38,000, the quote for the Mirfield Show marquee is now over £11k so standard increases are likely. Cllrs discuss the groups that may apply and consider limiting the maximum any one group can apply for. Cllr Sullivan Proposed to limit to 50% of the budgeted amount of £38,000 but did not receive a second for this proposal, so withdrew. Cllr Naisbett **Proposed** to limit the amount any one group can apply for to £15,000 which gives an opportunity for more groups to apply Cllr J Hirst **Seconded Vote: All in favour**

9) **Community Fund** – Propose to increase to £7000 as possibility of more benches supplied by MTC and also increased costs like hanging baskets

10) **Regeneration & Community Support** – Propose to leave at £16,000 as need funds in case anything occurs, but nothing on the immediate horizon

11) **Propose to add Column 11 Professional Fees** £5000, due to the possibility of controversial planning applications, MTC need to be able to send sound objections if needed

The above totals **£143,000**.

Reserves – Clerk asks Cllrs to look at the Draft Budget Detail and explains the reserves. Propose to leave Election Reserves at £34,000. Propose to increase Civic & Cultural Events to £20,000 as above explanation. Propose to leave Regen Reserves at £35,000. Propose to add £10,000 Fees Reserves as per explanation for Column 11 above. Propose to add £10,000 General reserves, which may be needed for a website or can be drawn to any other column if needed. This gives a total of £111,011.68 in reserves including Allotment account, N Plan allocation, Sports Council funding & stalls deposits. This concludes the Draft Budget Proposal. Clerk concluded that if the budget and reserves were approved, based on these figures the council could leave the precept at £107,000 as per last year, with a small decrease to £15.10 Band D due to higher tax base. Cllr Guy thanked the Clerk for a sterling job producing a fiscally sound budget, unlike others, which also did not increase the tax burden on Mirfield Residents. Cllr Naisbett **Proposed** to accept the Clerk's recommended budget of £143,000 and £111,011.68 in reserves and all the budget headings as per the Budget Summary & Detail Cllr Guy

Seconded Vote: All in favour

3. To discuss and approve 2024/2025 Precept – Having resolved to set the budget at £143,000 and after discussing the various precept options provided in the budget detail Cllr Brown **Proposed** to set a precept of £107,000, this being the same as last year and not putting further tax burden on the residents of Mirfield Cllr Naisbett **Seconded Vote: All in favour**
4. To agree appointment of Internal Auditor by Northern Internal Audit Services for audit conclusion 2023/2024 - Cllr Brown **Proposed** the Clerk appoint Northern Internal Audit Services for audit conclusion 2023/2024 Cllr Naisbett **Seconded Vote: All in favour**

MTC140/2023

Community:

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

1. To discuss and decide any action necessary the recent announcement: Withdrawal of landlines and switch to digital calls - Phone companies intend to withdraw the existing analogue telephone system, called the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN), by 2025. The PSTN is an aging network that is becoming harder and more expensive to maintain. Industry stakeholders have highlighted benefits of the switch to digital, such as improved call quality. UK telecoms regulator Ofcom expects that most

customers will see minimal disruption. Some customers may need more support from their phone service provider. Ofcom advises customers to get in touch with their provider if they:

- Have other devices that rely on the PSTN, such as telecare and security alarms.
- Would be unable to contact the emergency services if they lost landline services in the event of a power cut, for example because they do not have a mobile phone or reliable mobile signal.
- Have a disability or other needs that mean they require help with installation

Cllrs discuss the effect that this will have on some residents and Cllr Sullivan explains in detail what is expected of the phone companies and what their actions should be. Resolved to place on website for information and possibly ask library, health centre and churches if they would display a poster which explains what is happening.

MTC141/2023

Public Question Time:

Nothing had been sent to the Clerk but 1 resident asks if MTC can ask Kirklees to enforce the removal of the fencing surrounding the development at the old council offices as it is unsightly when entering the town.

MTC142/2023

The Date of The Next Town Council Meeting.

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 21st February at 7.30pm

Time Meeting Closed.....**8.41pm**.....