

Shirebrook

Town Council

Minutes of the **Full Council** meeting of **Shirebrook Town Council**
held at **6:00pm** on **Wednesday** the **31st** of **July 2024**
at **Shirebrook Village Hall, Park Road, Shirebrook, NG20 8JP.**

PRESENT

Cllr. P Chapman
Cllr. S Cheeseman
Cllr. F Gobey
Cllr. P Harford
Cllr. C Kane - CHAIRMAN

Cllr. J Lewis
Cllr. B Murray-Carr
Cllr. D Smith
Cllr. N Smith
Cllr. M Stockdale

Mrs J Jeffery - TOWN CLERK & RFO

IN ATTENDANCE:

Members of the public (38)
Miss S Stevenson – MINUTE CLERK
PC 14717 Jake Stone
PCSO 12970 Sam Fellows
Grant Galloway – CHIEF EXECUTIVE @ DRAGONFLY DEVELOPMENT LTD
Chris McKinney – SENIOR DEVOLUTION LEAD @ BOLSOVER DC
Matt Liddy – COMMUNITY SAFETY AND ENFORCEMENT MANAGER @ BOLSOVER DC

2024/095 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies had been received or were tendered on behalf of;

Cllr. T Chapman
Cllr. C Dale
Cllr. S Fritchley
Cllr. V Kirby

RESOLVED: That the apologies and reasons for absence be approved.

2024/096 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS.

No declarations of Interests were declared to the meeting.

2024/097 FOREWORD BY THE TOWN COUNCIL CHAIRMAN.

Cllr. Kane welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited fellow Councillors to introduce themselves to the room. He then went on to detail the Council's staffing levels within each department, he listed the Council's assets and also explained how we accumulate as well as generate income. He moved to the next item on the agenda and welcomed Mr Chris McKinney to address the room.

2024/098 UPDATE ON SHIREBROOK MARKET PLACE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT.

Chris McKinney from Bolsover District Council presented an update on the Market Square Development project.

He informed the meeting how, following the depressing Covid period of 2020, the District Council had been trying to find ways to help Shirebrook to come back from its struggles looking for ideas in the hope of encouraging new visitors and business into the town. Bolsover District Council initially invested £20,000 into research and development to identify strategies and eventually they put together proposals that would encourage funding. The proposal was to develop and renovate the market square with spaces for people to sit and reflex, to include ample space for the ongoing market trade as well as including a commercial building, the use of which will be determined by STC. They set to implement their plan in a 3-phase process and work began on phase one in July 2024.

Mr McKinney went on to explain that phase one is well on track to be completed on schedule by the end of August. He described how phase 2 and 3 would be managed and how full completion is scheduled to be the end of March 2025. He welcomed questions but they were more related to anti-social behaviour and security, and therefore, Mr McKinney admitted there were professionals present who were better placed to could give the appropriate responses.

2024/099 UPDATE ON CREMATORIUM DEVELOPMENT PROJECT.

Grant Galloway of Dragonfly Developments Ltd was present and provided an update on the Crematorium Development project.

He explained to members of the public how the plan to build a crematorium had come about and why it had been deemed to be a worthwhile and lucrative project for the area before offering to take questions.

2024/100 TO PERMIT QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

A period of time to receive questions from members of the public on matters pertaining to the Town.

Answers will be provided to questions that can be answered at the meeting.

Further responses will be provided after the meeting for any questions that cannot be answered on the night.

Member of public 1: suggested the valuation of the land on which the crematorium is to be built was undervalued as it should have been classed as building land.

Cllr. Kane explained that the land was designated for, and would only be used for, cemetery use, and therefore should not have been valued as general building land. Mr Galloway explained that the land was green belt and the only reason for development would have to be for a cemetery / crematorium.

Member of public 2: suggested that the 4% payment to STC after profits would amount to nothing.

Mr Galloway explained that a great deal of research had been undertaken and evidence showed that in fact there is a great need for a crematorium in this area and that it would prove profitable in a relatively short period of time as the nearest alternatives are a minimum of 30 minutes away and there are always waiting times to access these.

Member of public 3: asked if there was an agreement in place?

Cllr. Kane confirmed there was.

Member of public 4: said a request to view the agreement had been submitted under the Freedom of Information Act but it had not been produced.

Cllr. Kane explained that he had asked BDC's solicitors for a copy but was told he would need to ask STC's solicitors for this, so we are making a complaint to the BDC's solicitors.

There was much discussion with members of public raising concerns about safeguards for STC money and made allegations that BDC have said there is no agreement.

Cllr. Kane agreed to look into this allegation and said he would ensure personally, that if he can share the content of the agreement, he will do so. Mr Galloway confirmed there is an agreement in place.

Member of public 5: asked who are the directors of Dragonfly? *Mr Galloway explained he was the Chief Executive and Cllr. Fritchley was the Chairman, Deborah Watson, Carol Wood, Emma Stevenson and Janet Tait are Directors.*

Members of public voiced the suggestion that this was a cause for suspicion as Cllr. Fritchley was also a District Councillor of Planning and argued this could only create a conflict of interest.

Member of public 6: asked why is Dragonfly profit making?

Mr Galloway explained again the concept of how Dragonfly had been developed and why. He added that information is easily accessible via Google and that it had become a common practice, Nationwide, to create such organisations, as these can assist Councils to save money. Much discussion took place questioning about the rules requiring 3 quotes. Mr Galloway explained that the process of gaining quotes did occur. He explained how Dragonfly would enter their quote as well. He explained that Dragonfly was set up to bring in profits for BDC because they will also tender for work outside of their area also.

Member of public 7: asked, just to clarify then, it seems to me that we have an option to use a contractor or Dragonfly, but Dragonfly's profits goes back into the Council?

Mr Galloway answered, yes, that is exactly what happens.

Member of public 8: asked so is it open to conflicts of interest?

Mr Galloway explained that 3 Solicitors did a review of conflicts of interests and put in place very robust internal structures to safeguard against this.

Member of public 9: asked of fellow members of the public - what is the point in us going on and on about a project that has been passed and is underway, he stated, we can hardly stop it or make a difference now? He then put the question to fellow members of the public: why don't you nominate yourselves to become councillors?

Member of public 10: responded by saying he had lost interest when a piece of land that had been donated to the town was then sold. He added, and yet now the Council say they have no money.

Cllr. Kane interjected to clarify: that no-one has ever said we have no money. He went on to reiterate how and where we spend money, ie, wages, equipment, market, allotments the office and how we generate money, ie, from the market, allotments, the bungalow rent and eventually what is currently an income of £400 from green land will become much more, possibly as much as £12,000 from the crematorium profits. Cllr. Harford added an explanation: that, 14 years ago, STC received £153,000 from the Central Government from Council Tax Support Grant Funding. This was gradually reduced each year and for the last 5 years STC have received no grant funding from the Central Government.

Member of public 11: asked why don't we build ourselves instead of letting BDC take all the profits? *A person answered: and where does the funding come from to start with?*

Member of public 12: asked for further clarity over the running of Dragonfly.

Mr Galloway explained we have an order book, we create and we find work, for example, we are currently carrying out work for Bassetlaw Council. Dragonfly brings in revenue and is cheaper than alternative organisations because it is owned by BDC so all profits go back into the pot.

Member of public suggested that Dragonfly were monopolising the market.

The Chairman noted that the same ground was now being covered and moved to close the debate. He reminded members of the public that he had promised to demonstrate the Agreement to their nominated person.

Cllr. Kane introduced Mr Matt Liddy to address the room to talk about anti-social behaviour.

Mr Liddy commenced by introducing himself and advising members of the public how many staff work within the Community Safety Enforcement Team. He explained how they work in partnership with Derbyshire Police and Fire Brigades and the NHS Commissioning teams. He then offered to take questions:

Member of public 1: asked what safety and security measures would be put in place to protect the new market?

Mr Liddy explained how doing this will be difficult, but they had now outlawed gangs and drinking by utilising the Public Spaces Protection Orders and they will continue to do so as necessary with changing communities. The design of the market had been done with a lot of thought to help combat ASB activity.

Member of public 2: asked, is there a review of cameras on the marketplace? Are they used? and do we get information from them?

Mr Liddy advised that currently, the Police would access the cctv as required. He went on to inform members of the public however, that the District Council are developing a scheme which involves a purpose-built establishment, where it is planned there will be a 24 hour manned hub viewing cctv across the District, with the aspiration to have an immediate feed to the police.

PC Jake Stone confirmed to members of the public that for now they would approach the council to view footage. They had investigated and hoped for an interface into the station or to an iPad but the development of this had proved difficult.

Mr Liddy explained the reason it would be difficult is due to the necessary in-depth legislation around data protection.

Member of public 3: asked if this would be something STC are pushing for too?

Cllr. Kane confirmed that it is most definitely an ongoing project receiving full support from STC.

Member of public 4: are we talking solely about the marketplace?

Mr Liddy explained that eventually it will be wherever cameras are placed; so can be anywhere. Mr Liddy informed members of the public that they must start reporting incidents as currently calls are not coming from Shirebrook. There was much discussion from members of the public explaining why they would not feel comfortable in reporting incidents. Mr Liddy sympathised and added that whilst the scenarios were all unfortunate and sad to listen to and to have experienced, it was figures that counted when it comes to identifying where to add more resources and I cannot stress enough how necessary it is to make the reports. He reassured members of the public that there are mechanisms to protect people's anonymity.

Member of public 5: suggested if there were enough police officers we would not need cameras and some discussion followed.

Member of public 6: asked if the cameras as the leisure centre were of a resolution adequate to pick out faces?

Mr Liddy explained how legislation is in place to protect children. He advised if any members of the public had concerns they should follow and communicate with the Police on Facebook. There was much discussion and debate around visibility and ASB and drug abuse. Mr Liddy said we do not always get it right but can we keep trying to do our best.

Discussion moved to talking about e-bikes and scooters that were proving to be a nuisance.

PC Stone informed members of the public how many had now been confiscated and were off the streets. He reiterated the need to keep reporting with as much evidence as possible in order to help identify the riders who were not only putting themselves in danger but also members of the public. Mr Liddy added: and to take it further, if culprits of ASB are found to be a Council Tenant, the Council will also get involved and their tenancy will be jeopardised.

The subject moved to the number of Houses of Multiple Occupancy ‘HMO’s’ in Shirebrook. Members of the public expressed their concern that we have far too many. Members of the public also complained that they bring with them the wrong type of tenant. Much discussion took place with PC Stone and Mr Liddy giving their perspective. Discussion took place around the reasons for declining the planning applications of such establishments. *Cllr. Kane explained how almost impossible it is to decline a request for a HMO if the plans abide by the rules. They cannot be declined simply because we feel there are too many of them or for any of the reasons we have been discussing.* Cllr. Kane thanked Mr Liddy for his attendance.

A member of the public asked why had the land at the side of the Lidl store that he suggested had been left in trust to the STC, had then been given it to BDC?

Cllr. Kane admitted he could not answer this as it was before his time on the council.

A member of the public asked what was planned for the land on Hill Crest?

Cllr. Kane informed the meeting that this was private land that would possibly become part of the long-term Growth Plan over coming years.

Discussion took place about the possibility of future Town Meetings and Cllr. Kane advised the meeting that if there was a need for them, we would be happy to host them. He added that we would just need to know numbers attending and an idea of when people would like to meet. He explained that it would not be economical to utilise the Village Hall if there were only a few members of the public wanting to attend.

Cllr. Cheeseman addressed the meeting suggesting there was evidence of mistrust about STC sales and assets, and he asked that before any further deals were done, they should be discussed in meetings with members of the public.

Member of the public asked: just what minimum or maximum numbers would need to be present in order to discuss and approve? Adding: because if only 10 turn up to a meeting, then there will be another 100 who couldn't be bothered to attend, who still remain unhappy. Some discussion ensued with no resolution.

Discussions turned to the Village Hall with a member of the public asking if it is true that there were plans to demolish the building in order to build houses?

Cllr. Kane explained that as part of the new Leisure Development they were considering options to incorporate the hall within the Centre. He explained how the Village Hall as it is, is costing a lot of money to run and upkeep. He reiterated that no firm decisions had been made and he reassured the meeting that if it is demolished then Shirebrook Town Council and the Community would benefit.

2024/101 TO APPROVE THE DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL.

The date for the next Ordinary Meeting of the Town Council is scheduled to take place on the 14th of August 2024, in accordance with the approved meeting schedule.

THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 20:45 HRS.

SIGNED: _____ CHAIRMAN

DATE: _____