

LibDem AGM 14th November 2024

Matlock Town Council Report

The year has been a difficult one for the Town Council, mainly from an administrative point of view. The loss of the Finance Officer to ill health and subsequent difficulties with the financial accounts has led to the new Town Clerk, Simon Hosmer spending much of his time focused on ensuring the Council's finances were in order. His diligence has meant that the accounts for the last civic year could be signed off by the external auditor. Since then, the internal auditor has also reported with only minor changes to procedures needed, and these have been made. As a town council, I believe we owe Simon a debt of gratitude for his continued work in this area. Simon is still working towards his Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) and we hope that he will achieve this during the current year.

In addition to the loss of the Council's finance officer, the team leader for the outdoor staff has also been signed off medically for several months. Nevertheless, the outdoor team has continued to perform to standard.

Turning to the councillors, Jason Knighton was elected mayor for the current civic year and is pursuing the role with aplomb.

Cllr Ashley Orwin was co-opted to replace Alison Wain who resigned.

Steve Wain and Paul Cruise have also resigned leaving two vacancies. The positions have been advertised.

Cllr Diane Fletcher has been very ill and has been unable to attend recent meetings

The County Council has initiated a discussion of the use and potential consolidation of the public buildings in Matlock. The Town Council was invited to participate but has decided not to do so because the proposal made was detrimental to the identity of the council as an independent body.

The Council has had preliminary discussions about the adoption of the Imperial Rooms by the Methodist Church, but no proposal has been made by the Church for the Council to consider. Therefore, no action has been taken.

The Imperial Rooms themselves are now well used again after the hiatus arising from the pandemic. They are being used for weddings, with ceremonies and receptions taking place there. They are also back in use for community groups and some additional bookings on a more commercial basis. The plan is to separate out the Imperial Rooms management from the Council itself with a separately branded website and online room bookings. Officers have been working on the issues associated with that including a substantial simplification of the charges.

As a background task, officers have been working towards the replacement of the gas boilers with air source heat pumps but that will not happen in this civic year using grant funding.

The outdoor team continue their work in the town. Planters are still a source of concern for some council members. The Council is responsible for Dene Fields and the management is outsourced to xxx who use a group of volunteers – the Dene Field Rangers to do much of the work. The work is done to a plan which generally involves rewilding the meadows to increase the variety of species to be found, to maintain the woodlands, and generally manage the planting on the fields. There is a pond at the bottom of the hill that has been completely renovated and boasts many species of insects as well as water plants.

The outdoor team have continued their work in other parks and gardens for which they are responsible, with a noticeable improvement in the Princess Diana Garden on Bakewell Road.

The Town Council has some responsibility for keeping some footpaths tidy, responsible for cutting back vegetation where that is possible to ensure they are passable.

A full events programme has also been held this year, culminating in the Christmas Parade and lights switch on next weekend. Last year, was a real success with a fantastic parade enjoyed by the public who lined the pavements several people deep along the whole route. The children really enjoyed the motorcycle group “Lead of Zeal”.

At Easter, a Bunny Egg Hunt was organized in conjunction the Matlock Deception Rooms. It was reported that 450 people attempted the trail which brought people into the shops. Winners received their prizes at an Easter Event in the Imperial Rooms.

The Council has also joined the Live and Local events coordination and would be looking for events that could be held in the Imperial Rooms from their list.

LibDem AGM 14th November 2024 Tansley Parish Council Report

It has been an eventful year for Tansley Parish Council but the three major events were as follows.

Stephen Longworth was elected unopposed in October to replace Cllr Toplis.

The perennial issues of housing development in and around Tansley continued with active involvement of the Parish Council. Section 106 funds were received from Woodall Homes that were used for the Village Green and Tansley Fete Field. Overall, the Parish Council believes that Tansley has more than its fair share of development. Associated with housing are two other perennial issues – adoption of a small amount of private highway and the safety of development and crossing on the main road through Tansley.

A major theme for the year has been a dispute between the local amateur football club and the Parish Council over the use of the Fete Field. This was improved using grant funding from the FA with a proviso about use over the succeeding 21 year period. That has now run out and the Parish Council wanted to consider extending the use of the field to other sports and events. To this end it consulted the parish in a manner that seemed to the football club to be prejudicial to its interests. The dispute escalated and has yet to be resolved.