

The DRAFT minutes of the meeting of Miserden Parish Council

Held 5th January 2024 held in Miserden Village Hall 7.30pm

Present: Chairman Martin Ractliffe, Vice Chairman Kevin Allin, Councillors Gideon Duberly, Laura Cobb, District Councillor Julie Job, County Councillor Sue Williams

Apologies: Cllr Richard Dangerfield, Clerk Gwen Durland (sick leave)

In attendance: Six members of the public.

In the absence of Clerk Gwen Durland, Laura Cobb was nominated and voted in by the other Councillors to take the minutes.

Declarations of Interest:

None

Minutes from December:

Cllr Cobb had not received a copy and could not approve the minutes. The copies are to be resent.

Swedish Houses in The Camp:

Miserden Parish has four Swedish houses in The Camp that were built after World War 2. Of the four houses, two are now privately owned. The houses are constructed as two semi-detached buildings, and one side of each building is privately owned. The ownership is as follows:

House 1: privately owned and renovated.

House 2: Council owned, with sitting tenant and in poor condition.

House 3: Empty, but in a moderate good condition.

House 4: Privately owned and renovated.

Stroud District Council has written to Miserden Parish Council with information, from a report they commissioned in 2017-2018, revealing that the two Council owned Swedish Houses are not suitable for redevelopment, refurbishment or selling. Stroud District Council has undertaken surveys of all the Swedish House properties that it owns and is conducting a housing committee meeting in February 2024 to discuss the future of the buildings. Stroud District Council has a limited budget. To this end, Stroud District Council are in consultation with the tenants and local Parish Councils.

Miserden Parish Council has been requested to submit its priorities on the desired future of these houses. A letter from Miserden Parish Council will be sent to Alison Fisk, in the housing department of Stroud District Council, after feedback from the community, with the Council's desired outcome.

District Cllr Julie Job read out the contents of the District report to the committee and public. Chairman Martin Ractcliffe opened the meeting to discussion.

Points raised were as follows:

- Stroud District Council have written that the two houses in the Camp are not suitable to be refurbished, redeveloped or sold.
- Stroud District Council have a limited budget per house.
- Covid delayed the consultation.
- Post covid, building costs have risen significantly.
- Miserden Parish Council has only two council owned properties.
- Rent rises nationally have led to no affordable rents now being offered in Miserden Parish. This has led to a number of rural workers and families leaving the Parish. This has then led to a negative knock-on effect on the local school and businesses.
- A representation from a member of the public was made that they have contacted Stroud District Council as they would like the opportunity to buy and refurbish House 3, should it be put up for sale. They have not received a reply, and District Cllr Julie Job advised them that no decisions for the future of the houses had been made yet.
- The refurbishment of the privately owned Houses 1 and 4, by the owners, has proved that the houses are refurbishable and can be made habitable to a high standard, in accordance with building regulations and fire standards.
- According to the public, Stroud District Council was made aware of issues of neglect and work needed doing on the Council properties, by residents and tenants, over the past eight years. The residents and tenants feel that had this work been done in a timely manner, the houses would be in a much better condition and probably lettable.
- It is felt that the report received by the Parish Council is missing vital details as to how much the refurbishment of the two properties would be and a timescale of works. Could the Council elaborate on their recommendations. Can the Council provide clarity and answers on the results of their report.
- District Cllr Julie Job urged the members of the public to contact Stroud District Council directly with their views and attend future meetings in person or online.
- Cllr Kevin Allin suggested that the destruction and removal of the houses could cost the same as refurbishing them to a lettable standard.
- There is a concern that any demolition of the houses, could severely destabilise and impact the structure of the remaining privately owned houses.
- A member of the public commented that if a house was demolished, it could cause significant problems to the semi-detached it is attached to. This could incur the Council the cost of making good the remaining privately owned Semi-detached property.
- The Parish Councillors, in attendance, unanimously agreed that their desired outcome, would be the refurbishment and reletting of the two properties. The two properties are the only two affordable social housing options in the whole Parish.

- Miserden Parish Council would like to see more social housing built, as opposed to the little remaining local social housing lost.
- Miserden Parish Council would like to meet with Alison Fisk to discuss this matter further.

Planning Application S.23/2105/FUL

This application has been refused by Stroud District Council since being added as an agenda item. A member of the public spoke on behalf of the applicant and said that the applicant felt aggrieved that no Planning Officer has made a site visit.

Other Matters Arising

A member of the public said that there were still no minutes accessible on the Miserden Parish Council website. Cllr Allin was given the login details and will look into this matter, as it was believed to have been resolved.

Public left at 8.28pm

Clerk update

Clerk Gwen Durland has made it known that she will be likely to return from sick leave by the end of January 2024. Chairman Ratcliffe is going to contact Roy, the clerk at Painswick Council, to see if he can be employed to make sure that all the Miserden Parish Council documents are up to date and available to the public.

Website

Due to the ongoing missing minutes issue on the Parish Council website, a discussion was had about whether the Council needed a new, more user-friendly website. Cllr Allin will try to navigate the current website and see if there is a problem displaying the minutes.

Meeting closed at 9pm