

**Confidential Minute from Middleham Town Council Meeting Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> July 2023**

**Item 11**

**Middleham Key Centre Future Plans**

Cllr Byford provided a verbal summary of the meeting held between Cllrs Byford and Watson and Mr Steve Scott, Solicitor, Leyburn on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> July 2023, regarding the potential future/disposal of Middleham Key Centre.

Key points raised and discussed were:

1. SS advised that MTC is legally able to sell or otherwise dispose of MKC.
2. The Council MUST demonstrate 'Best Value@ in doing so. This is not necessarily for the highest monetary value as other, qualitative, matters are also involved. Especially to provide the community facilities and benefits for the residents of Middleham.
3. SS advised it would be difficult to demonstrate Best Value without testing on the open market, whether for lease or for sale.
4. SS considered that Secretary of State approval should be sought. This will confirm due diligence and proper disposal has been undertaken, thus protecting the interests of residents and the Council. He could not advise on how long this process might take.
5. SS agreed that a short-term lease from January 2024 would be in order, to a third-party organisation, once the MKC Charity funds had run out. He suggested seeking other possible charitable organisations as potential partners but did not know of any charitable equivalent networks to the Open Market approach where this could be achieved.
6. SS confirmed that due diligence is needed before a rental/sale agreement with community provision is undertaken. This is whether with Racing Welfare or any other organisation or charity. Covenant or Break Clauses could also be used in any agreement to protect and future proof the community interests so far as is possible.
7. SS undertook to make further enquiries on charitable organisations and networks and to feed back to Council.

Councillors discussed and agreed that it is critical that all steps are undertaken to ensure the best future use/disposal of the Key Centre and to ensure that Middleham has a community facility appropriate to the community's needs and sustainable on their available resources.

Matter Closed at 20.40 hrs.

Date:

Signed: