

## Castleton Parish Council Meeting – Jon Pearce MP

### 1. The loss of permanent homes to holiday homes and lets - achieving a balance.

The Chair opened the question session by raising concerns relating to second homes and the associated issues, such as erosion of community rural housing, how to retain homes for long term residents? Asking Jon how he could help the village?

Jon shared with the attendees that he lived in Hope Valley and therefore he completely understood the pressures and concerns about maintaining village life, that the school his own children attended some 5 – 10 years ago was under threat of closure. That there is a need to move away from second homes and attract and retain young families within villages.

There has been some positive movement, in April this year HPBC have introduced the doubling of Council Tax on second homes which will be a disincentive to purchasing a second home. In addition, in the budget the Chancellor announced that stamp duty will increase by 5% as another financial disincentive.

Regarding Airbnb's, there will be a registration scheme set up with proposals for separate planning rules to apply. There is also a willingness to look at the tax relief currently in place.

There is a lot of pressure in this area to clamp down on second homes, moving away from those with the wealth to purchase additional homes to freeing them up for first time buyers and those that wish to live permanently within villages.

There are also points around providing affordable housing for families. One of the issues within Hope Valley is there is not much land that can be built on, therefore there is not much scope to build affordable housing. This is not going to be a solution, and it is going to be much more about disincentives for second homes and incentives for families to stay or move into villages. The key to this will also include job opportunities either locally or commutable. Commuting needs to be considered alongside the other issues regarding local transport, which is another area of concern and the next topic.

The Chair opened a question-and-answer session for Councillors.

Cllr Stannard:

Q: Relating to Planning legislation and making it an issue to apply for permission, is this likely to be introduced or is it a “we would like.”? How certain is this?

A: It is not certain. This is something that the government and previous government are/were thinking about. That this is the direction of travel as is clear with the steps that are taking place, the doubling of council tax etc. more focus being given to getting affordable housing into villages. Where there is no land to build the only alternative must be putting pressure on second homes etc to free up houses for permanent residents.

Q: When it comes to Parliament, will you specifically be speaking, should you be given the opportunity, in favour of making planning permission necessary for second homes?

A: Absolutely, it is believed that this is the right thing to do. The problem when it comes to Airbnb's is that it has become so easy to buy a second home and turn it into an Airbnb. By putting extra barriers like registration and planning makes sense. This industry needs to be better managed; it is not only taking away housing but jobs from local pubs, hotels etc.

Q: So given the change you will be speaking to Parliament with that effect?

A: Yes, that would be the case. Any opportunity to push this will be taken.

*Standing Orders Suspended.*

The Chair asked the Clerk if there had been any correspondence addressed to the Parish Council on this matter. The Clerk confirm that there had not.

The Chair opened Questions to the floor.

Q: What do you see as the timescale for implementation of these useful measures?

A: From April 2025, this year HPBC will be implementing the doubling of Council Tax on second homes and either from this April or next there will be the introduction of the 5% increase in stamp duty. The other matters are subject to legislation changes with a potential they will be introduced under this parliament.

Q: If a struggling farmer has a holiday let on their land will this be subject to these changes for second homes or are they treated separately?

A: If the property is on their own land and does not have a separate land registry, it would be therefore part of the same business and not treated as a second home for Council Tax purposes.

*Standing Orders Reinstated*

*4 residents entered the meeting.*

## **2. The future of Rural Transport, current services under threat**

The Chair introduced the second topic, referring to the slides. Stressing that rural public transport was terribly important to residents, especially those without cars. That there had been some limited successes recently especially with the number 62 service, however reliability of the buses has deteriorated. There is an active group within Castleton called Better Buses for Castleton Group of which the Parish Council has two active members. That this subject is close to the heart of the Parish Council, and they would like to know what pressure can be brought to bear on those responsible to improve performance.

Jon expressed that he felt this topic was intertwined with the next upcoming topic on visitor pressures and parking. The issue has been exacerbated more recently with ambulances and tractors being unable to pass, that this is a major issue for Hope Valley. Unfortunately, the parking issues have not been helped as over the last decade public transport has lacked investment, with a decrease in bus routes. The reduction in bus travel has been going in the wrong direction for some time. DCC do not have funding, their finances are in a dire trouble. This with the setup of the bus service is a problem. This is and will change with the introduction of regional mayors.

The new 62 service is a positive step forward, but is still not being used enough, and more publicity and awareness of the service is hugely important for its success.

The Hope Valley Line, whilst not stopping in Castleton, is also hugely important in terms of people being able to get into Hope Valley and surrounding villages without bringing their cars.

Tragically, despite spending £150K on upgrading the line there is still only one train every hour and this is a problem as it deters people from using it as much as they should. As most visitors are travelling within an hour's radius, we must think better about how services are integrating, most people are coming from the surrounding big conurbations such as Sheffield, Greater Manchester, South Yorkshire etc. It is believed that having an East Midlands Mayor will help, taking a strategic look at where transport is coming from and connecting all services.

Overall more investment, better integration and improvement on the Hope Valley Line is needed to offer a viable alternative to travel by car. Giving better connections from rail into bus routes like the number 62 and shopping services.

Regarding the parking issues, the Police have been doing an excellent job, issuing tickets with some cars being lifted, greater numbers in police presence are required to deal with the current situation. There is a need to continue and improve advertising of public transport alternatives, with the addition of making it clear where and when a car can be parked.

The relaxation on landowners to open pop up carparks are often not managed properly with many closing quickly. It tends to be residents rather than visitors that are aware that a site facility is open or has been closed.

The good news is that we are moving in the right direction in relation to enforcement but there is need to improve on public transport and advertisement of services available.

The Chair opened question and answer session for Councillors.

Cllr. Simm:

Q: More of an observation, thank you for mentioning the 62 bus, we have been working with Edale PC and have had a meeting with Hope PC this week. We are trying to set up a meeting with Bus Owners to establish a more joined up thinking.

There are some concerns regarding the Bus Service Improvement Plan coming from DCC into the Mayor's office, in that, what kind of influence will we have against big cities such as Derby, Nottingham etc and how we will fare in terms of rural transport within Hope Valley?

A: At the moment I can say that the East Midlands Mayor Claire Ward is involved and committed to High Peak. But we need to make the case and have representations as this will be important in making sure we are kept on the radar. My argument for a long time being that we are not on the radar, that we are often second best, first for services to be cut and last for investment.

Change in this field will be difficult, Nottingham already has a municipal bus service, it would be difficult to do as South Yorkshire and Greater Manchester, taking over the whole bus service and considering passenger needs.

We currently have a patchwork of operations which is working in the favour of the Bus Operators, in their interest and whether it is commercially viable.

Changing the current model is going to be difficult in the East Midlands, because of the larger cities. We will have a big job on, but local Councillors, MP's and residents need to raise the profile.

Q: Are you aware that a big petition is about to be launched? The Parish Council and local Better Buses for Castleton Group are keeping a close eye on the situation.

A: Yes, it is my view that we should move to the same model that Sheffield and South Yorkshire are proposing and that that has been adopted by Greater Manchester, the franchising model.

A bus service needs to be regular, consistent; it is only then that people can see it as a viable alternative to driving cars, generating more users and changing behaviours.

*Standing Orders Suspended.*

The Chair asked the Clerk if there had been any correspondence addressed to the Parish Council on this matter. The Clerk confirm that there had not.

The Chair opened Questions to the floor.

Q: It was mentioned that the use of rail and bus services could help alleviate the parking issues. What service would be available before dawn as some visitors do arrive in time for the sun rise?

A: Further improvements need to be made on the Hope Valley Line, we need at least two trains an hour, improving the link with local bus services.

I agree that it is not commercially viable to have public services prior to dawn, but if a case could be made with evidence of a requirement, then this could be considered.

I think we also need to accept that there will always be those that will drive cars.

Q: As a member of the Better Buses for Castleton, whilst encouraged by the comments made on integration of rail and bus services, this will take time. Whilst we wait for the changes from the Mayor and authorities what pressures can you apply.

A: It is an issue I have been raising for two years, even though I have been told by a member of DCC that there is not an issue, I will continue to raise and apply pressure where I can. I will be encouraging the East Midlands Mayor on this subject. Also there needs to be involvement with the Mayors from other areas such as South Yorkshire and Greater Manchester where a lot of our visitors come from, their services need to integrate with ours to ensure that public transport is a viable option.

Q: We have more buses and coaches coming through the village causing congestion, putting pedestrians at risk. What can be done to manage this process better? Maybe widen the roads? Also congratulations to the Police who are trying to control people parking.

A: We will struggle to widen the roads. We need to change behaviours and reduce the number of vehicles. Clearly there is an opportunity to encourage use of the 62 bus, which is currently under used. The Police are doing an excellent job, issuing tickets, and lifting vehicles but we need to be better communicating different ways of travel.

Q: Changing the priority from visitors, what about local residents getting to hospital appointments etc. If you miss or are late for an appointment due to unreliable buses, then you have missed your slot. This has been experienced when going through chemotherapy. The buses can be an hour late or not turn up.

A: This is heard across High Peak trying to get to hospital appointments in Chesterfield, Sheffield etc that they just cannot get to their appointments, with so many people are reliant on public transport. It is a difficult situation, as we do not have an acute hospital within High Peak, they are always on the peripheral it means people having to travel outside the area. One of the reasons I am in favour of the move to franchising services, as South Yorkshire and Greater Manchester, is that we can dictate services to our hospitals rather than have routes that are based on commercial viability.

There are charities within the area that are available to help with travel to hospitals if needed.

Q: The charities are known, but it is reliable buses that are needed. Currently they regularly fail to turn up or arrive and leave early.

A: As mentioned earlier the bus services have been moving in the wrong direction. We have made a massive commitment to get them back on track. Other initiatives that would help is electronic noticeboards showing times of services, allowing for journeys to be planned.

It was agreed that a more reliable service is needed.

Q: Cllr Judge asked if the previous question from a resident, on buses and coaches potentially putting pedestrians at risks when driving through the village was a separate issue?

A: The Chair confirmed that it was. That in the interest of time with other topics to discuss, this question-and-answer session had concluded.

#### *Standing Orders Reinstated*

### **3. Visitor pressures (such as parking and littering) on infrastructure and public services in and around Castleton and how to deal with these. And pursuing case files opened by Robert Largan.**

The Chair introduced the topic on the pressure that parking and litter is causing on our infrastructure, which everyone present will be aware. We are seeing unprecedented tourist pressures, including parking that has made the national news, as residents we are aware about how the conditions in the village and surrounding landscape are suffering. We understand that people want to come out and see the beautiful landscape, but things are out of control.

The Chair referenced the slides and the subtopics.

Firstly the illegal parking/obstruction of roads on Winnats Pass, this is where the question arises on the case files opened by Robert Largan. One of the initiatives was to increase parking fines to the highest penalty, this was being investigated.

Q: Is this something that has been followed up?

A: Nothing on this matter had been transferred. Files are only transferred if individuals had been written to. Campaign material is not transferred.

Q: How can we get it transferred? Would we need to start the process again?

A: Files will only be transferred if it is a named individual, and they have given approval.

Cllr Eyre interjected. That this initiative was just one that had been discussed. A meeting had taken place with DCC Highways, Police, HPBC and others in relation to pressures at Mam Tor. With regards to the increase in fines, it is believed that the current rate is not dissuading people it is not a deterrent from parking illegally. It is hoped that by pushing fines to the maximum this will help minimise some of the parking issues.

In response, Jon Pearce confirmed that he had not been written to personally on this matter but would be happy to pick it up and see what could be done. That it may be better if there were clearer parking restrictions. Double yellow lines etc, that DCC Highways could do more. In addition, if there were more presence from Police and enforcement officers that will also help.

Cllr Eyre to forward all previous correspondence to aid Jon to get up to speed.

Chair added that DCC Highways are also investigating this from their end.

#### *Standing Orders Suspended.*

The Chair asked the Clerk if there had been any correspondence addressed to the Parish Council on this matter (i.e. Visitor pressures). The Clerk confirm that there had.

Q: Clerk read out the first correspondence sent in by members of the admin team for Concerned for Castleton Group. (see Annex A).

Following the reading of the correspondence the Clerk, after having previously sought clarification from CFC added the following:

The referral to creating a Touring Caravan Site was not a proposal but pointing out that whilst the Council imposes rules on businesses, they have neglected to follow them themselves.

A: This touches on the final topic, of the Local Government reorganisation. Currently we have DCC responsible for some elements and HPBC others, in addition we also have Peak Park. In some ways the reorganisation will help by removing one tier and leaving just one body to be responsible and accountable for most of these issues and frustrations, which should be a move in the right direction. In terms of the overnight camping. I agree it seems absurd to allow this but not allow them to clean up after themselves, that is just asking for issues. From my perspective it would be sensible for the right to overnight camping to be removed. There are plenty of campsites in the area, who often have spaces. I am not sure if there is a need for people not camping in campsites. I will be willing to look into this. We need to however consider businesses; do they generate trade? Is there anyone in the audience that is a business owner? The general response was that there was no money being spent locally from the overnight campers.

Q: The Clerk read out a second correspondence sent from a resident. (Annex B)

A: Campervans are not contributing to the local economy and in some cases causing antisocial behaviour, there seems no good reason for allowing this to continue. I do not know what the Council Councillors or Borough Councillors think on this matter, but it seems an easy fix, if there is a will for it.

I fully support this and believe all the issues are interconnected. We need to make sure when people visit, they are aware that there are perfectly good, cheap, easily accessible campsites with facilities rather than parking on the roadside. We need to be proactive in communicating these campsites, as with the public transport.

Q: The Parish Council are currently in the process of finalising a pre-Traffic Regulation Order with DCC Highways. Their view on the overnight camping at low Mam Tor is that they would not want to do anything as they would be worried that they would move on somewhere else that is less safe. Because there is little traffic on the road DCC Highways see it as safe cul de sac used by a population of free campers.

A: I do not understand that rationale. They appear to be parking there because they can, whilst there are perfectly good facilities across Hope Valley where they can go. If they choose to go elsewhere and park where they should not be they should be moved from there too.

Q: Would you be willing to take this up on the Parish Councils behalf?

A: Yes absolutely.

The Chair invited Cllr Judge to speak: It was good to hear the response from the audience present in relation to business interests. As a Parish Council we must look at the interest of both residents and businesses.

The Chair opened Questions to the floor.

Q: All that I hear in the pub is how much, how much, they do not want to spend money. Why is it that Council does not adhere to the regulations they put on other businesses, parking being between 3 – 5 metres etc. By allowing free parking with no rules and regulations they are causing problems like the New Road, one vehicle went up and was followed by another two, preventing a farmer from leaving the farm.

A: If they are not contributing but costing the Council and putting off other visitors then something should be done.

Q: I own one of the pop-up campsites, we have some that considered roadside camping but paid as they felt it was safer whilst others ask the costs and say no, they will park for free. After the roadside campers have left, I have, with my children, cleared some disgusting waste. We have had to deal with loud music, singing, the lighting of open fires, all at 1 – 2 o'clock in the morning, and not everybody sees all this.

Q: I have a farm on Mam Tor Road and have a problem with welfare, the number of times I cannot get off the farm to feed and lamb the sheep. When I have confronted people, I receive abuse. The police have been very helpful and provided bollards, but we are putting them where people should know not to park, in some cases they simply take no notice or move the bollards.

Q: Is this called Wild camping? Is there going to be any legislation in this country where people can and cannot park overnight on a roadside. I know they had problems at a seaside town where they were parking, is there anything that can be done via legislation?

A: It is more about giving local communities, local authorities, Peak Park the ability to put their own decisions around where people can park rather than a national approach. The powers are there, DCC could say this was not going to happen anymore obviously it would initially be an extra pressure on the police to try and enforce it. But at the end of the day just allowing it on a neglectful basis of "they need to park somewhere else" then we would never have any parking restrictions anywhere, we all sometime need to park somewhere, sometime. But blocking someone's farm, this is something we should be able to sort and there is good reason to sort it, I am amazed that this has not been sorted beforehand.

Q: The Chair, raised future related issues:

1. Campervans taking up a lot of parking spaces and therefore increasing the pressure on other parts of the village.
2. The previous government introduced the 60-day campsites opening a loophole. These campsites can pop up without planning permission and with very few conditions. These campsites can have a detrimental effect on the landscape and poor/safe access to the highway,

which are not being taken into consideration. The monitoring of these sites to adhere to the few conditions imposed, such as providing waste disposal, days open throughout the year, is entirely left to the residents.

3. The recent announcement of the Visitor Centre closures. Out of the four, two will remain, their function will be more akin to a shop with a small amount dedicated to visitor/staff interaction.

Can you comment on any of these?

A: 1 & 2. With regards to the 60-days camping and car parking, I am inclined to be in favour of these rather than allowing camping/parking on the roadside. And the flexibility of being able to open at short notice where there is to deal with capacity. Where parking is an issue, having farmers being able to open their fields for weekends. Rather than apply for planning permission has been proven to be helpful in some villages as such I would be cautious of removing that flexibility. I take the point about refuse removal etc, but I would be nervous about being over restrictive where we have such fluctuating demands. It is difficult for farmers to retain a campsite all year round as it can be loss making for at least 4 or 5 months a year so having the ability to be flexible to open a short notice is potentially helpful.

3. Visitor Centres, I had campaigned to keep the Castleton Visitor open under the last proposals, I think it is important where visitors are coming in that they understand the country code, where is accessible and what facilities are available, so keeping the Visitor Centres open is hugely important. But they were only saved last time due to an anonymous doner/benefactor providing a delay in closures for a couple of years, sadly. I do think they are worth the money because they provide a valued service. I will be speaking to the Chief Executive to find out what is going on and whilst understanding the financial constraints that they are under I will continue to campaign against any closures.

Q: Cllr Stannard raised the concerns of the appropriate access to the sites, which is not addressed in the current legislation. If the access is not appropriate there is no opportunity to discuss this because there is no legislation to stop it, therefore whilst flexibility is good there should be some sort of control.

A: If there are specific things that would be helpful, that Peak Park should be considering under permitted development I would be more than happy to speak to them on these matters.

Q: Cllr Stannard continued, as this is legislation specific and permitted development generically, so the permitted development law needs to be changed to make for tighter controls, at a national level.

A: Yes, but I would want to speak to Peak Park first for their views. I have previously spoken to them but regarding how we get more parking, but not this point on access to sites. I will have that discussion with them and see where we go next.

The Chair opened Questions to the floor.

Q: Cllr Gourlay introduced himself as a County Councillor, Borough Councillor and that he had previously sat on the Peak Park Authority. If you go to villages, you will find that there is little confidence in Peak Park as a planning authority. If you listen to your labour councillor staff at the authority you will be told that it is dominated by Secretary of State appointees, that there is not democratic control of that Park Authority. It often feels that it is acting against the wishes of local residents and especially the wishes of local farmers. What can you do to change the direction of the party?

A: It is a conversation that has commenced, I have spoken to farmers and local businesses who are wanting very minor changes, access to the grid, solar panels, and changing use that has led to frustrations with the park. The Park feels like they are in a good place, processes are good, they are approving c75% of planning permissions. There is a suspicion that people are being put off applying for planning before commencing the process because of the process and feedback received.

Conversations will continue because I believe they need to change their approach and be more accessible.

Q: Cllr Gourlay continued, this ties in with this whole agenda that one of the chief aims is to bring more tourism into the Peak District. It will be difficult to address all the issues raised if tourists keep flooding into the area.

Q: Cllr Collins, Borough Councillor. Stated that she had heard the opposite regarding Peak Park and wanting more tourism but instead are looking at ways to deter visitors. Regarding the Visitor Centres,

Peak Park funding has not increased in years, the Peak Park has issued instructions regarding the Visitor Centres in the last two years because of funding, how will the Park be able to fund the centres as part of their statutory duties?

A: All public authorities have been struggling with money available to them, the Park is no different and they do have to prioritise their statutory duties. In terms of the Visitor Centres, there is a cost but also, I believe there is a saving with information given out, in terms of the damage that is done to the National Park, rubbish dumped because people not knowing the Countryside Code and related things. If we lose the centres the Park could be costing themselves money. I will be interested to understand their rationale and if they have investigated other alternatives to avoid closure.

With lots of visitors coming in, the Centres provide valuable information and guidance on how to behave, what facilities are available, parking, campsites, pubs all of which is good for local economy as well as working as a staging post in stopping things, such as parking on Old Mam Tor Road. They are important, and I would be loath to see them go but I completely respect that the Park have been under huge financial restraints for some time, that there is no magic money tree, unfortunately it is and is going to be tight.

Q: Cllr Judge suggested that there was a money tree if revenue was generated from all the roadside campervans.

A: The Chair replied that any revenue that could be gained would only be a drop in the ocean.

*Reinstate Standing Orders.*

#### **4. Local Government Reorganisation – High Peak moving from Derbyshire to Greater Manchester?**

The Chair introduced the topic of the Local Government Reorganisation.

Q: In the view of the Parish Council you made an unfortunate statement, which was picked up by the newspapers, that you thought High Peak may be best moving from Derbyshire into Greater Manchester. We feel that our main transport, NHS and education links and many others such as theatres etc are with Sheffield and Derbyshire and not with Manchester. There are concerns about how these decisions on restructuring are going to be made. There has been very little information, these are the questions we would like to be answered.

Do you really believe that High Peak should be absorbed into Greater Manchester?

Do you recognise that the High Peak is very varied, some parts of which may be better in Greater Manchester, but other parts will not? For example, you may view the A57 as a border, the North side going to Manchester the South elsewhere or it could be a North/South Derbyshire split which has recently been suggested. Also the High Peak is now part of the East Midlands under the new Mayoral Authority.

A: If we start with first principles, which is what we have been discussing in terms of money and accountability. Having High Peak Borough Council and Derbyshire County Council has often led to confusion over who is responsible for what. Streamlining and having greater accountability for who is responsible for the local area will be hugely helpful and save money. It will save on duplications, such as having two Chief Executives, two Finance Officers, along with all that goes with having a two-tier authority. So streamlining is the right thing to do and will ultimately provide better, with more accountability, public services. With the confusion at present as to who is responsible for bins, schools etc therefore clear lines of responsibility are important.

Then the issues are what does the single tier authority look like. The guidance so far is that you need to be looking for c400-500k for a Unitary Authority. In High Peak we have c90K people, so we are going to have to join with somebody as part of the reorganisation. On day one Derbyshire County Council wanted to put into the first tranche and wanted the whole of Derbyshire to become a Unitary Authority. There was no consultation, nobody was made aware that they were doing it, it was just done. Although no decisions have been made the local elections in May would be cancelled and the whole of Derbyshire would go into a Unitary. Experience of dealing with issues across the whole of High Peak is that we always get a bad deal, so much time is taken up by fighting against closures of care homes, SEND provisions, the state of our roads, it's never felt that we are a priority, we always seem to be the first place that receives cuts and the last to gain any investment, I am determined that we are not going to remain in this position for the next 50 years.

50 Years ago in the 1970's, parts of High Peak were in Cheshire and in Lancashire etc a decision was made in terms of the boundaries, but the boundaries have never been fixed. We must make the right

decisions not for the May elections, not for party political reasons but for the future. We need to be able to answer questions in the future as to why did we do that? Why did we make those decisions? Why did you go with X when you did not consider Y. So the decision of Derbyshire County Council to go for the whole of Derbyshire without any thought does not make sense. As such I have opposed this, the elections should go ahead and then have some time to properly consider our options. This is the starting point.

Who we eventually make a deal with is going to be important. It is interesting in terms of the framing. People are saying I live on this side of the High Peak and my links are into Sheffield and that is right. But I do not know of anyone with links to Derby, Nottingham, or East Midlands. People are saying they feel connected to Derbyshire as an identity which is understood, on radio Derby I was challenged on this, you are Mr Derbyshire, you were born and raised here, you support Derby County, your family live here, why are you considering this? My identity will not change I will still be from Derbyshire no matter what happens, there is no Yorkshire County, but people are still proud to say they come from Yorkshire, and I will still be saying that I come from Derbyshire. So this is not about identity this is about how we get better public services. Better access to healthcare and investment into our area.

When it comes to the economy side of things the reality is that for most of High Peak, we are already in Greater Manchester economy. Companies that invest in High Peak in places like, Glossop, Buxton, New Mills, don't because of our access to Derby or Nottingham but because of our access to Greater Manchester, Manchester Airport. So we need to consider carefully where we look.

Whilst it is understood that on the Castleton side of High Peak in terms of hospitals, residents use Chesterfield and Sheffield Hospitals, the other side they are very much going to Greater Manchester for a lot of their healthcare.

We need to think carefully about what is in our best interests, from an economic view, we are not part of the Northern Powerhouse, which is a plan for the whole of the north to be lifted up to try and raise living standards, raise investment to the same levels of the Southeast. Even though we have a connection with Sheffield and Greater Manchester we are not included. It would be a huge driver for growth and give us the opportunity to increase the number of trains along the Hope Valley Line for example, which is important in developing jobs etc.

An example of how it currently works:

If I have a problem with Northern Rail or how we get train services I have to go to effectively three Mayors. If I go to the East Midlands, Claire Ward, where does she invest? She has a triangle along the A52, between Derby and Nottingham and up the M1 to Chesterfield. We are not central to this, therefore having a conversation about the Hope Valley Line or investment in High Peak is difficult. Luckily Claire Ward does buy into it, but we do not know who will be the next Mayor and that they will do the same. So we need to protect ourselves.

If we did move into Great Manchester, which would mean that we would need to do a deal with Stockport or Tameside etc, there are two elements to that. One, you could have a smaller local authority because the Manchester model is based on 200-350K, therefore we would have much more sway. If it was the whole of Derbyshire as proposed, then we would only have one in eight ability to influence decisions, if we go in with Stockport we would have a one in three, so a big say within that County regarding where investment went. If we went into a North Derbyshire Unitary, which will be focused on Chesterfield, Bolsover and Northeast Derbyshire, then High Peaks tagged on with a likelihood of a one in four/five chance to influence. This is an important consideration.

If somebody said we could have a North Derbyshire Unitary and become part of the Northern Powerhouse, and all the Mayors are being asked to put forward growth plans, where they are going to invest, what they are going to invest in. If we could have our own growth plan, and it is made statutory that all the Mayors had to agree to invest in our area, then I would buy into this.

Doing a deal with Stockport or any other is not guaranteed, they may not wish to collaborate with us. We need an informed debate on our big issues, healthcare etc and need to be putting our case forward so that we are not left without any choice and consumed within a massive Unitary where we have no influence.

It has been suggested that High Peak could be split, yes if that is what worked and what people wanted then that is fine, but it would be watering down any influence that High Peak could have within a Unitary.



I am open to all options, but I am not willing to accept the status quo because I do not think it has been that good, there has not been the investment, our infrastructure is not good enough. I am determined we get the best possible deal.

Chair opened Questions from the Councillors.

Q: (Cllr Judge) To clarify have you be misunderstood and/or misquoted?

A: In terms of High Peak economy, although Castleton may be the only part not on the Hope Valley Line, for everything else the importance between the connection with Greater Manchester and Sheffield and the opportunities that could bring for greater investment in our communities and that for most of High Peak, we are already in the Greater Manchester economy. Half a million travel to work journeys from High Peak go into Manchester and very few go to Derby or Nottingham. We need to make a choice, are we in East Midlands or do we look towards Derby and Nottingham?

Q: Cllr Judge interjected, so you are asking not saying that we should definitely be part of Manchester?

A: I cannot say we should be in Greater Manchester, but we must do a deal with someone. I am not being forced in any direction by Central Government, it is a local decision. Derbyshire have decided they want a Derbyshire Unitary; I think this is a bad idea; I think that High Peak will be lost and continue to get poor service and be forgotten about. What comes next is about us trying to find the right deal, I would rather a smaller Unitary and have a big an influence as possible with Greater Manchester. So maybe Northern Derbyshire, but I am worried about where the investment goes. My preference would be to retain High Peak in total but if it had to be split then that is fine if it is the best deal. I will be looking to make a case for us getting the best deal possible with the best public services, the best amount of investment and whoever that turns out to be I will want to go for.

The Chair stated that before suspending standing orders we should move to the last slide which is about the consultation process.

Q: How can the information being provided tonight be continued going forwards. Are you going to use a website, newsletters to get across your message, for reaching out to people?

A: At the moment we are in a holding position. As things currently stand, as Derbyshire County Council are the primary authority they were able to put in their proposal that the whole of Derbyshire become a Unitary and cancel local elections so that within a year it can go through. I have opposed this and have written to ministers that we should not be cancelling local elections, I believe they are running away from the electors, and that we need a bigger debate as I do not believe there is an agreed position in the whole of Derbyshire. High Peak are not the only ones against this, it is the whole of Derbyshire that needs to buy into the idea that it should be the whole of Derbyshire. And I would think that most of the districts would think that is a terrible idea.

So currently there is nothing to consult on. Either the proposal from Derbyshire County Council will be accepted with local elections cancelled, and then there is nowhere to go. Or if rejected, it is at that point we can have proper discussions with Chesterfield, Stockport, etc and these might offer some of the preferable options. At which point a proper debate can be held on what people want.

*Standing Orders Suspended.*

The Chair asked the Clerk if there had been any correspondence addressed to the Parish Council on this matter. The Clerk confirmed that there had not.

The Chair opened Questions to the floor.

Q: Cllr Collins two questions, 1. Where did you get the idea that identity does not matter?

A: I did not say identity does not matter; I said my identity will stay the same, as will everybody else.

Q: Cllr Collins continued that her impression was that there is an emotional reaction to moving to Greater Manchester and that the tie to identity must be considered. 2. Peak Park have not been included in any discussions, if moving to either Sheffield or Great Manchester it will be even more difficult to perform their function because it already must deal with several local authorities. How will the move to Great Manchester improve things.

A: The Peak Park do not formally have a say, but we would want to know their view. All I can respond is that Peak Park are already in Greater Manchester, it already exists, nothing will really change.

Q: If we were to move into Greater Manchester what changes will there be to the provision of healthcare? Would we still be able to access Chesterfield and Sheffield hospitals, would it make any difference?

A: Access will still be available, there will be no change. What it would mean is that Greater Manchester would be the authority that was responsible for public health etc.

At present we are within Derbyshire's ICP who are responsible for our healthcare, in terms of acute hospitals which is a very small part of the provision, we would have more opportunity to influence wider healthcare and integrate with those that we get healthcare from.

Q: The concern being geographically that if access were no longer available, then travelling further for hospital appointments and transport would be an issue.

A: You will still have access in the same way and therefore no change to the distances to travel. It is more about budgets and who has oversight of the healthcare. There are payment mechanisms that swap between the two, currently we are swapping the other way.

With regards to transport, what is happening within Sheffield, South Yorkshire and in Greater Manchester, they are taking responsibility for their buses and likely to be taking over the responsibilities for local train services. If we were to stay in the East Midlands, which is not being ruled out, it goes back to a previous point if we are trying to upgrade the Hope Valley Line at one end South Yorkshire has taken over their end and at the other end Greater Manchester has taken over then another Mayor would need to be included in conversations regarding the middle bit, which seems unnecessary when we could just have the Greater Manchester Mayor talking directly to the South Yorkshire Mayor, making things simpler and having a greater influence.

Whilst appreciating not so important to Castleton but, the Bee network, which is Greater Manchester Integrated Transport System. This has been extended into Glossop, where the benefits are already being seen. They are benefiting from the £2.00 travel because a lot more is being invested into their travel. They will also have click in/out on their services by 2026 when the trains will be taken over which will provide huge savings. If all of Hope Valley was taken into the Bee Network that could mean huge savings for anyone travelling. So there is opportunity for us to be part of a massive investment.

Q: It is appreciated that you are putting this in a slightly different context than appeared in the press. The example given regarding the Bee network and expanding into Glossop, is this not an example that it can be done across boundaries? Therefore not necessary that being in a small authority you have more influence. If we joined Stockport for example, do they know where we are? Working in Manchester they have not got any idea where we are, as far as they are concerned, we live out in the sticks. I would have my doubts that even if we were part of Greater Manchester or the Northern Powerhouse that they would recognise us. Also, where we are and the opportunities we do and do not have within the National Park, how much difference is this going to have? All these suggestions are around big cities, would we be better off being tagged to them or be grouped with other rural areas further afield where we have more in common? Also, with regards to the Hope Valley Line, yes it has been improved, the discussions at the time had very little input from local authorities the decisions were made at National Rail level. Therefore does it matter if it's local authorities and boundaries stopping these things or that it's other things? I am wondering how realistic some of the things are with integrated transport.

A: What we are trying to do is devolve power out of the government into regional authorities, so that they can make decisions on things such as integrated transport. You asked does it matter, yes, the Bee Network is stretching out. For example, Marple are going to be on the new network and will be saving hundreds of pounds a year and those in New Mills not, those in New Mills on the same train line will be charged full payment and will not be able to click in/out and that would be huge for New Mills. If I could convince the Bee Network to come out to New Mills, then great how do I and the people of New Mills then hold the new Mayor accountable? If they deliver a bad service, how are they accountable? We would not be able to vote them out as we would have no democratic rights to hold people to account who are running our train services. That is why it is important that we have a say. As in terms of do Stockport know where we are, yes, but if we join them, we will become the second biggest overall authority in Manchester. That would mean we would have a huge say in where money gets spent and where investment is, so very quickly Greater Manchester would find out where we are. Another example where we could benefit, in Glossop we have children (16–18-year-olds) most of them traveling into Greater Manchester to college. These children and those from other surrounding areas are sitting next to other children from over the border that are receiving the hour pass, which is free travel within Greater Manchester, resulting in those from Glossop being thousands of pounds

worse off. Children are taking the decision not to go to college, not choosing the careers they want because of the transport costs. We did on this occasion, working with Mayor Claire Ward, get a discount fare for those children. What was wanted was to get them the hour pass but Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, would not spend Greater Manchester's taxpayers' money, rightly so, on fares for people who are not paying in. So we had to do the discount deal, that DCC opposed, making it very difficult.

The Northern Powerhouse already believe that we should be a part, as we are central to growth within the North and critical for connections to South Yorkshire and Greater Manchester. And if we look at where people are going to work and where they are travelling, where our economy is, where our public services are, it is in the North and not in the East Midlands. Whatever happens we must get the best possible deal.

The Chair thanked Jon, I believe you have answered and clarified a few things regarding the reorganisation. And thank you to everybody who came to listen to Jon. We would like to stay in touch with Jon and be part of a greater consultation on the reorganisation when or if the opportunity arises. A round of applause was given by the audience.