

Questions from Members of the Public pursuant to Standing Order No 7

Council - 19 February 2025

1. Question from Dawn Wilkinson:

There are no public toilets in the Bus Station since they were closed in 2022. This is a problem for bus drivers, visitors to our town and especially for people who suffer with continence issues. The only option if you need to go to the toilet in town is to pay a visit to the Leisure Centre, the Council offices or to visit a cafe or pub, all involving a walk. In May 2023 Councillors stated that there were "plans for a small retail unit and all ability toilet, at no cost to the public", and that "legals are complete and plans are with the council for approval." We are now almost 2 years on and I have not seen any change to the building.

My question is this: When will there be accessible public toilets at the Bus Station?

Reply from Councillor David Wright, Leader of the Council

I am grateful to Ms Wilkinson for her question. As she points out, there are a number of choices within Atherstone for members of the public to use such as at our offices and Leisure Centre.

Atherstone therefore has more options than most of our other market towns or villages and there are a range of other facilities on private premises.

The Council has reached an agreement with someone who wishes to develop the building but we are concerned that this is taking some time to complete. My officers contacted the interested party earlier this month to explain this has now to happen, failing which the building would be placed back on the open market. I am hopeful therefore this will spur the other party into redeveloping the building without any further delay.

The agreement includes a requirement to allow the public to use the toilet which would increase even further to facilities that are available in Atherstone.

2. Question from Richard Kelly:

Can the council confirm why the former Britannia Mill site has still not been made safe and what steps have been taken to bring the pavement and highway back into use and when they expect this to be?

Reply by Councillor David Wright, Leader of the Council:

I would like to thank Mr Kelly for his question and we share the frustration of residents regarding the impact of this privately owned derelict land.

Our Building Control officers advise that there is currently no danger from the site to the public and they review the position regularly to ensure this is the case. We have no interest in the site remaining as it is and our officers have been called out regularly out of hours to deal with issues.

Most of the positive work that has taken place regarding this site has been at the prompting of this Council – we now have a comprehensive set of planning permissions that would enable the owner to redevelop the site and we have convened partners such as Homes England and the West Midlands Combined Authority to provide advice and assistance to the owners to seek the best way forward to develop the site.

It remains however a private site and it is the responsibility of the owners to do whatever is needed to develop the land.

With regard to the pavement and road, my Officers have pursued the owners several times a week to implement hoardings at the site which County Council and Building Control officers have agreed would allow the road to fully reopen. It is likely however that the pavement nearest the building will need to remain closed.

Notwithstanding these frustrations I am sure everyone will agree that the most important consideration is the safety of the public and that has to remain our priority.