

Matlock Bath Parish Council

Chair: Peter Baranek

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Parish Clerk: Julie Baranek, Coppice End, Woodland Terrace, Derby Road, Matlock Bath, Derbyshire DE4 3PU telephone 07914 420545 (Mobile)



Miss S Dines, MP

2nd June 2020

Dear Miss Dines

We are contacting you further to our letter of 17th May where we outlined the concerns we have been receiving from our residents. You will note in that letter that we also wrote to both Derbyshire Dales and Derbyshire County Council urging them to address the concerns of our residents and act upon the suggestions we have made to assist with, in particular, social distancing.

We note your press release of 22nd May and in particular, your comment about our residents being put at risk by the large number of visitors who have come to Matlock Bath and feeling like they can no longer go out because of these irresponsible people.

On behalf of our residents, your constituents, we call on you to press the Government to help make social distancing in Matlock Bath achievable in order to protect our residents. This can be done by:

- Making all pavement parking an offence – we believe it is, and has been for a while, in London. This needs to be enforceable by both Parking Enforcement Officers and Police. Regularly we endure motorcyclists in particular, but more recently, other motor vehicles, mounting the kerb and parking on pavements which reduces being able to safely socially distance.
- For a number of years we have experienced street furniture being put out by businesses which has taken up a lot of room on our narrow pavements. In particular A boards and other advertising structures which block the pavements. We now find with businesses re-opening that they are still putting out their furniture thus reducing pavement space. We believe the Police need to have the powers to be able to remove an object placed on the highway that partially obstructs pedestrian movement.
- Probably the most important power, we believe that Government needs to give to the Police the powers to enforce social distancing. Whilst we accept that the current Derbyshire approach – the 4 Es is acceptable – they need the powers to enforce the 4th E – Enforce. Residents are still writing in with their concerns that visitors are just not socially distancing putting all of our community at risk of spreading the virus. Some visitors seem to think that because some of the restrictions have been lifted, the virus has gone.

We have written again to both of our authorities asking for an update on what measures will be put in place for social distancing but to date not heard anything from them. We would like to see pavements extended by suspending parking bays with barriers. We are aware of other Councils in tourist areas who have already extended their pavements in a similar way to what we suggest. We would also like to see a 20mph speed limit introduced through the village.

We were, however, extremely grateful to the Police presence we had over the bank holiday weekend.

We have had many media TV reports from the village which I am sure you will have seen highlighting the lack of social distancing with visitors.

Residents and the Parish Council were extremely disappointed to read your Facebook postings regarding your visit to our village. Your comments have caused a great deal of upset and insult to residents since you fail to acknowledge the enormous problems we have endured in the village for the past few weeks and still are and instead you state that there are no problems. It is difficult for us all to comprehend that on a Saturday afternoon between 1.00 pm-3.00 pm you found everyone observing the social distancing rules in a village which does not lend itself to socially distancing normally let alone during a pandemic when 2 metres between pedestrians has to be observed. Reports have come in from residents that the village was not quiet last Saturday and one business reported the best ever Saturday trading. I do know that at 6.00 pm on Saturday the village was still busy with bikers sitting on pavements preventing people from passing and a walk round Derwent Gardens impossible without having to go off the path to avoid people coming from the opposite direction in large groups, 3 and 4 abreast.

We find it disturbing that you chose not to inform the Parish Council or indeed Derbyshire Dales District Council that you were coming to Matlock Bath even though you had received correspondence from us and was aware of the concerns from our residents – your constituents. The Parish Council and our residents would have been more than happy to explain directly to you the problems we have had to endure during this pandemic as well as our concerns for the lack of social distancing by visitors in the village.

Perhaps you would like a return to the village soon to give your constituents the chance to show you the problems our village is facing.

Yours sincerely



Julie Baranek
Clerk to Matlock Bath Parish Council