

MINUTES OF THE CIVIC COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 11 APRIL 2017

PRESENT

The Deputy Mayor – Councillor Wood
Councillor Baddeley
Councillor Court
Councillor Davies
Councillor Hall
Councillor Hart
Councillor Jones
Councillor Lawson
Councillor McGuinness
Councillor Rogers
Councillor Sheldon
Councillor Swift
Councillor Whilding

Also in attendance
Councillor Nicosia

73.16 APOLOGIES

The Mayor – Councillor Salt
Councillor Jackson
Councillor Rushton

74. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- a Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Dispensations: Councillor Sheldon in any matters concerning Biddulph in Bloom. Minute 83a Councillor Rogers is Treasurer of the Festival Committee.
- b Other Interests: Councillor McGuinness is a churchwarden at St Lawrence's Church. Minute 80 Councillor Hart knows the adjacent landowner to the kissing gates.

75. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 14 March 2017 were signed as a true record.

76. UPDATE ON PROGRESS WITH FINGERPOSTS

The location for the Biddulph Moor post had been received. It would be opposite the green and point to Trent Head Well, the Village Hall and Biddulph Grange. Councillor Jones noted that the green had become cluttered with posts and requested that Highways remove one. The Chief Officer had been in contact with Highways and the contractor and requested a timescale for the installations.

77. DECORATION OF COUNCIL CHAMBER- CHIEF OFFICER

The Chief Officer noted that following the building works, the time was right to redecorate the Council Chamber. It had last been done in 1999. It was

proposed by Councillor Whilding and seconded by Councillor Wood that the Chief Officer should seek quotations. The District Council had sent a specification requesting adequate paint and an approved contractor.

Councillor Hawley clarified it would be the walls and ceilings, not the woodwork and carpets that would be tackled.

The Chief Officer reported that the curtains had been removed and found to be severely contaminated with mildew in between the curtain and the lining; a decision had been made not to rehang them on Health and Safety grounds. There should be consideration of whether they were needed, or whether the blinds were sufficient. If they were felt to be needed, the existing curtains could be dry-cleaned. The new windows and extension below would make the room much warmer in the winter.

Councillor Jones felt that the room must be refurbished properly. The Town Hall was a focal point in the town.

Councillor Davies proposed that the walls and ceiling are painted first then consideration given to the rest of the room, including blinds and curtains. All agreed.

78. TOWN HALL- UPDATE AND AVAILABILITY, REQUEST FROM CLLR ROGERS TO DISCUSS ADVERTISING IN COUNCIL'S CONNECT

Councillor Rogers had attended a meeting of the Arts Forum where it had been noted that there were many events held in the town and in the Town Hall, but the public were unaware. Councillor Rogers had installed two television screens at the Victoria Centre which now displayed scrolling information of events held at the Centre. He suggested that one could be installed in the new Councils Connect reception area. It was easy to load the information onto a memory stick and insert it into the TV screen.

Councillor Hall said SMDC had been considering something similar and were waiting for the work to be completed.

Councillor Davies noted that there was a similar one in the Reception at Moorlands House in Leek.

Councillor Jones thought it was a great idea and far preferable to the exterior neon ribbon idea that had been discussed previously.

Councillor Hart thought it could also be an opportunity for amateur photographers to have their photos displayed.

Councillor Jones suggested that the cost would be minimal; a screen and a memory stick.

Councillor Wood asked if wifi was available in the town hall. If not, could it be installed during the current building works?

Councillor Hall noted that it had been passed at District level to have wifi in the building once the works had been completed. He proposed that the Chief Officer requests further information on a live date, seconded by Councillor Davies. Agreed.

Councillor Rogers noted that there was a router downstairs; it would be simple to expand coverage to the whole building with an expander.

Councillor Davies updated members about the suggestion from SMDC that up/down lighters would be more appropriate. He was not happy with this suggestion and noted that this Committee had requested floodlighting. All agreed that up/down lighters were not acceptable and that members wanted costs for their original suggestions.

79. UPDATE ON THE MEETING ABOUT YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE TOWN CENTRE (30 MARCH 2017)

A copy of the minutes were tabled for information. Members were reminded that the meeting had not been a public meeting; comments made must not break that confidentiality.

The Chief Officer advised that the meeting had been well attended and produced positive actions; there will be a follow-up meeting on 22 June 2017.

80. UPDATE ON HERITAGE PROJECTS

The Moorlands Partnership Board (MPB) has offered a grant of £2575 or 50% of eligible costs, whichever is lesser, towards the cost of the work on the Overton Road troughs.

Councillors were asked to agree whether they accept the grant offer and the conditions below:

- All necessary consents (including listed building consent) are obtained prior to works commencing.
- Sample of all materials are approved by the conservation officer.
- Highway works to protect the listed structure are approved with the conservation officer.
- A second estimate for the works is obtained and the grant reduced accordingly if the second estimate is lower.

There was discussion about the number of quotations that should be sought for this work.

It was proposed by Councillor Hart and seconded by Councillor Lawson that the conditions are accepted. All Agreed.

Councillor Davies reported that the Kissing Gate work had been completed; photographs were circulated to enable Councillors to see the work. The post tops looked impressive and were an exact replica of the Robert Heath work.

Councillor Hart thought they looked a lot better; the quality of the workmanship was excellent. He added that it was these small details that

'made Biddulph'. Our heritage was not in the town centre, but out in the countryside and this was a credit to the town.

Councillor Davies updated the meeting about the well on Tower Hill Road. A representative from Hollins Quarry had visited the site and advised that the trough under it is a nice one, with cobbling to the top side and the trough runs past the arch on the lower side. He had suggested that there should be some exploratory tidying work to investigate what further work was needed. All agreed that this was appropriate.

Councillor Jones reported that investigation at Trent Head Well had not been possible as the ground had been too wet; Mr Allcock would be visiting the site again soon.

Councillor Hart said it would be good to get 2 or 3 projects a year through while the Moorlands Partnership Board is still available. He encouraged members to look for projects in their ward and bring them forward for consideration.

The Chief Officer advised that she had met with a representative of the Biddulph and District Genealogical and Historical Society and had been invited to speak about the proposed heritage projects in the town, at a meeting to be held in June 2017. Any members who also wished to attend should contact the Chief Officer. Councillor Sheldon expressed an interest.

81. VERBAL REPORT ON THE FIRST ARTISAN MARKET OF THE SEASON

The First Market of the season had been held on Friday 7 April 2017. There had been 25 stallholders and good footfall. The new Events and Partnerships Officer Ms Hancock had spent time with the stallholders, getting to know them and receiving feedback.

The stall table tops needed replacing and Ms Hancock was rethinking some of the signage. Positive feedback had been received on social media and from the Biddulph Business Chamber.

Councillor Hart felt the time was right to refresh the artwork.

Councillor Lawson had been very pleased to see a fruit and vegetable stall. Councillor Davies noted that we are in the process of finding a suitable place for them to come to Biddulph every Friday.

Councillor Nicosia asked if there were plans for music at the event. The Chief Officer responded that this should be in place for the next market; Ms Hancock had only been in post for two weeks prior to the market, but had lots of ideas. Councillor Hart thought that the lack of a suitable power point had hampered potential musicians. Councillor Davies noted that this Committee had asked SMDC to install appropriate sockets at the same time as installing the floodlights.

82. STATION ROAD UPDATE

Councillor Davies gave a progress report on progress. The Chief Officer had been working with Sally Curley, SMDC and they were both attempting to contact Sainsbury's.

There had been discussions about Biddulph Town Council leasing the land from the District Council; nothing has been worked up yet until Councillors had considered this.

Councillor Wood preferred that the land was transferred to Biddulph Town Council, but it would depend on the price.

Councillor Davies felt that this Council should consider options or leasing and owning the land.

Councillor Hall expressed concern that the land should not be in two parts with a road through the middle.

Councillor Davies had met with Architect Beverley Poole about possible uses for the land. Councillor Davies had asked for advice about devising two schemes with or without the road. Ms Poole had noted that including a wider splay at the end of the spur would exceed our budget.

The brief would incorporate a monument to the miners of the town; a child friendly fountain, seating and an improved layout. The cost for a concept design would be £600. Councillor Davies proposed that this is accepted and that Ms Poole is instructed to carry out the brief. Seconded by Councillor Hart. Agreed.

Councillor Davies advised that planning permission should be sought as soon as possible as the s.106 grant would expire in 2019. This Council would then be in a position to commence the project.

83. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

- a Councillor Davies reported that a letter had been received from the Chairman of the Festival Committee requesting a grant £5,000. Councillor Davies noted that the Biddulph Festival grant comes from the Civic budget. The Chair of Finance Committee stated that the Festival should apply for a grant in the same way as other applicants. An application form would be sent to Mr Harris.
- b Shopkeepers in the northern High Street had reported problems with parking on the double yellow lines, making it difficult for them to load and unload outside their premises. There were bays for people to park for up to half an hour in the vicinity, but these were being exploited by all-day parkers. Concern had been expressed that Parking Enforcement Officers were rarely seen in the area. Traders had requested that a loading bay is put in place of the yellow lines keeping the area clear for traders to manage their businesses effectively.

Councillor Wood queried who would enforce a loading bay – parking enforcement or the Police. Councillor Hart noted that historically a loading bay had been proposed outside what was now the mobility shop and local traders put together a petition against it. Councillor Jones noted that lots of people parking on the double yellow lines were traders including one fast food delivery driver.

Councillor Sheldon noted that people abused the loading bay outside the Town Hall too. She added that people do park all day as there were very few Parking Enforcement Officers in the town and none in the evening.

Councillor Nicosia noted that blue badge holders can park on double yellow lines, but not in a loading bay.

Councillor Davies proposed that this Council looks into the potential cost of any changes to designated parking areas and requests more effective patrols from Clear Streets. This was agreed. It was noted that if anyone spotted a car illegally parked, i.e. on zig-zag lines, they should photograph the vehicle including the registration number, and send the image to Sgt Slinn with information on the location and time of the offence.

Councillor Jones asked that the Mayoral board is updated soon.

The meeting closed at 8.06 pm

Signed Date