

MINUTES OF THE CIVIC COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 11 JULY 2017

PRESENT

The Mayor – Councillor Wood
The Deputy Mayor Councillor McGuinness
Councillor Baddeley
Councillor Court
Councillor Hall
Councillor Hart
Councillor Jackson
Councillor Jones
Councillor Redfern
Councillor Rogers
Councillor Rushton
Councillor Salt
Councillor Sheldon
Councillor Whilding

13.17 APOLOGIES

Councillor Davies
Councillor Lawson
Councillor Swift

14. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- a Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Dispensations: none were declared
- b Other Interests: Reference Minute 19 Councillors Jones, Salt, Whilding and Wood are members of the Royal British Legion.

15. MINUTES

- a The Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 12 June 2017 were signed.
- b The Notes of the Young People in the Town Centre Group meeting on Thursday 22 June 2017 were received. Councillor Salt noted that it had been a productive meeting; actions had been acted on and more set. The next meeting would be held on Thursday 9 November 2017.

16. FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF POP-UP SHOPS

The Deputy Chair proposed that Standing Orders were suspended. This was agreed. Mr Matt McDonald (Chairman of Biddulph Business Chamber BBC) was invited to address the meeting to provide information about his recent experience trialling a pop-up shop.

Mr McDonald had trialled a pop- shop where he worked to see how people reacted. He had received positive feedback in person and via social media. He noted that some stallholders at the Artisan Market would be interested in trialling a pop-up shop.

He suggested that landlords of vacant shops are contacted; he believed that some would look on the suggestion favourably.

A pop-up shop allowed an organisation to trial a shop with less financial risk. Customers would see a rotation on the High Street of goods for sale, something fresh on the High Street; this would address the lack of diversity. Mr McDonald thought that the Biddulph Museum could be sited on the High Street. This would be a point of interest to attract visitors from Biddulph Grange; heritage and historic trails that are being created could be available from the museum.

Councillor Wood thought this was a win-win situation which would provide a great service and would freshen up the High Street. This idea should be taken forward with a lot of vigour; he thanked Mr McDonald.

Councillor Court endorsed Councillor Wood's words and asked how many pop-up shops were in town at the moment. Mr McDonald replied that there was one.

Councillor Hart thought that retailers should be encouraged to place objects from the museum into their shops; a heritage trail could be formed to link them together. This would refresh interest in the shops and promote the hidden things on offer in Biddulph, shopkeepers should think 'outside of the box'.

Mr McDonald noted that he had helped Mothershaws and Pedley's by setting up Facebook pages for them.

Councillor Salt congratulated Mr McDonald and asked how this Council could help. Mr McDonald wondered if the Town Council would pay a proportion of the rent for a pop-up shop. Councillor Salt suggested that a small committee is set up to work with Mr McDonald on his ideas.

Councillor Rogers thought this was part of Miss Jodie Hancock's job; she could act as a go between and report back to this committee.

The Chief Officer agreed with Councillor Salt that a group should be formed to look into how long the scheme would run for, how much it would cost the Council, its strategic objective, how it would improve the High Street, how it would benefit the Council as there would be no income received. A budget must be agreed by the Finance Committee and there must be a firm proposal of what it would cost this Council.

Councillor Hart noted that in the times of the Regeneration Executive the District Council had helped some businesses to move into more suitable sites by granting a licence to occupy instead of a lease. A long-term objective may be that the Town Council becomes the tenant and sublets to the pop-up shop. He suggested a working group of 3-4 people to go through the objectives and to seek professional advice.

Councillor McGuinness asked if the footfall had increased in the north of town with the pop-up shop. Mr McDonald said that there had been some interest, and that footfall had increased when the Museum had opened especially when Mr Worrall was in attendance.

Councillor Sheldon thought it was an excellent start and that it should be set up for a trial period of 12 months, she wished the project well.

Councillor Rushton noted that a trader at the market was interested in trialling a pop up shop, and she had made some investigations into the building next to the Conservative Club that was currently for sale.

Councillor Jackson noted that there were still empty shop units in the Sainsbury's complex and that the pop-up shops he had seen were located in malls. He noted that the one thing Biddulph didn't have was a coach park. A connection must be made between the Biddulph Museum, the proposed heritage trails and Biddulph Grange Gardens.

Councillor Jackson was concerned that if the Town Council put money into premises and set the rent at a favourable rate, other traders in the town would feel there was unfair competition. There were potential shoppers at Biddulph Grange and this Council should be tapping into it. The District Council had tourism and regeneration officers who we could contact. The Town Council was a willing partner, doing what it could to improve the High Street.

Councillor Rogers had worked in the High Street for 42 years and felt that it was not bad, but it could be better; we needed to get onto the bandwagon and step out of 'limbo land'.

Volunteers to join the working party were Councillors Salt, Wood, Nicosia, Court, McGuinness, Hart, Rushton and either Rogers or Davies.

Standing Orders were resumed.

17. CONSIDERATION OF CCTV ON THE HIGH STREET

A small number of CCTV coverage maps of the town centre were circulated.

The request that the Town Council consider coverage had been received from the Young People in the Town Centre Group. It was noted that the Millennium Garden area was not covered by CCTV cameras. The Chief Officer had reported an incident via the 101 number the previous Friday, where a number of large stones had been removed from the walls and balanced on the Millennium Stone.

Councillor Wood felt it was essential to have an additional CCTV camera in this area as a deterrent to anti-social behaviour and crime. He noted that grants could be obtained via the Police and Crime Commissioner for this project. He proposed that a grant is considered, this was seconded by Councillor Rushton. A vote was taken and all agreed.

Councillor Hall suggested that the District Council is informed of the problem in that area; it was their responsibility to install cameras. It was proposed by Councillor Hart and seconded by Councillor Jones that an additional CCTV camera is requested to cover the Millennium Garden area. A vote was taken and this was agreed.

The Chief Officer would investigate the options and report back to the next meeting.

18. TOWN HALL LIGHTING AND ELECTRICAL SOCKETS

The Chief Officer reported that the cost of the sockets could be sanctioned within the current works, but she had been advised that a lighting consultant must be commissioned for the floodlighting and this would not form part of the works.

Councillor Rogers proposed that the Chief Officer be authorised to go forward with this investigation, seconded by Councillor Jones. A vote was taken and this was agreed.

19. WAR MEMORIALS TRUST APPLICATION

Photographs were circulated of the War Memorial and the Chief Officer gave an update. The railings were in need of attention; the gun and rucksack were cracked and the additional names should be added. It was proposed by Councillor Rogers and seconded by Councillor Rushton that the Chief Officer submits a grant application to the War Memorials Trust, a vote was taken and this was agreed.

Councillor Baddeley asked if any progress had been made to remove the excess signage and street furniture surrounding the memorial. The Chief Officer had met with a representative from County Highways and reported that none of the signs could be removed as all were felt to be necessary at such a complicated junction.

Councillor Jones felt it was a shame that the memorial could not be moved to the front of the Town Hall. Councillor Salt noted two points: that in principle the War Memorials Trust would not pay for a memorial to be moved unless the ground was subsiding; the townsfolk put it there for a particular reason and we cannot go back and ask why.

20. WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT

Councillor Rogers noted that Biddulph.co.uk website was in need of updating. He proposed that the Chief Officer and Miss Jodie Hancock consider improvements needed to the software and functionality of the website, obtain costings and report back. This was seconded by Councillor Whilding, a vote was taken and agreed.

21. STATION ROAD UPDATE

The Chief Officer noted that contact had been made with Sainsbury's and they were working with the District Council's Estates Team to consider leasing arrangements. It seemed unlikely that the freehold of the land would be transferred to the Town Council.

Beverley Poole (architect) had stated that the plans for this area would be available for consideration at the next Civic Committee meeting.

22. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

- a. Councillor Rogers reported that anything said within the hearing loop in the Council Chamber can be heard downstairs in the foyer and just outside the building. It was noted that there is no hearing loop in the Council Connect reception. Councillor Salt felt that this was not something that could be addressed by the Town Council and was something that the SMDC needed to sort out. Councillor Hart thought that the loop should be turned off for County Council conferences. Councillor Jackson thought that the technical people should be called in. Councillor Baddeley noted that without the hearing loop she would find it difficult to contribute to the meeting.

- b. Councillor Rogers noted that he had been approached by two ladies attending a Festival event and asked why there was no mirror in the newly refurbished ladies toilet. Councillor Jones asked that one is installed in the gents too.

Exclusion of the Press and Public

The Chair to move:-

“That, pursuant to Section 100A(2) and (4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings whereby it is likely that confidential information as defined in Section 100A (3) of the Act would be disclosed to the public in breach of the obligation of confidence or exempt information as defined in Section 10 I (1) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act would be disclosed to the public by virtue of the Paragraphs indicated.”

The meeting closed at 8.25 pm

Signed Date