

MINUTES OF THE CIVIC COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 8 AUGUST 2017

PRESENT

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

25.17 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from
Councillor Salt

Councillor Harper and Hawley sent apologies.

26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- a Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Dispensations: Councillor Sheldon anything pertaining to Biddulph in Bloom. Councillor Jones' wife was still working at Sainsbury's.
- b Other Interests: Councillors Court and Whilding are members of the Royal British Legion. Councillors Court and Hall are members of Biddulph Rotary and knew the fruit and veg seller.

27. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 11 July 2017 were signed.

Councillor Davies requested agreement to move Minute 30 to the start of the meeting, this was seconded by Councillor Jackson, a vote was taken and this was agreed.

Councillor Davies proposed that standing orders were suspended to enable the guest to speak, this was seconded by Councillor Jackson a vote was taken and this was agreed.

28. STATION ROAD - SAINSBURY'S AND ARCHITECT UPDATES

Standing Orders were suspended and Ms Beverley Poole (Architect) was invited to address the meeting. Ms Poole explained the brief she had been working to on the Station Road project and circulated two sheets of A3 plans to members.

She had been asked to develop 'concept designs'. The first sheet gave an analysis and the options. The budget had been S.106 money in the region of £60,000. Ms Poole further expanded on the brief and designs.

Councillor Jones preferred option 2, but was not in favour of permanent sand.

Councillor Hart wanted to get a grip of the cost sooner rather than later. The sand would enhance the Festival, but could be emptied out and the area could be used for seating.

Councillor Rogers was concerned about drivers turning their vehicles round if the spur road was removed. It would be a dead-end with nowhere to go. He also queried where the fountain purification tanks would be sited. Ms Poole said they would be underground.

Councillor Nicosia thought there were nice features and we may be disappointed that they would not be achievable; she asked what was achievable with the finances available. Councillor Wood concurred. He didn't want to build up people's aspirations when it would not happen.

The Chief Officer explained that this was a 'chicken and egg situation'. Whilst it would be ideal to have costs on all these options, we were not yet sure what land would be leased or sold to the Town or District Councils. It was important to have options available to support these discussions. There were intensive negotiations being held with Sainsbury's representatives and we needed to be in a position to present something that broadly represented what had been discussed at Town Council meetings.

Councillor Lawson explained that the objective was to use the Sainsbury's S.106 money before the deadline. He noted that there was a place of worship across the road from the site; noise should be a consideration in the design. He would prefer a simpler option with a monument.

Councillor Swift concurred. He asked who would be maintaining the site when it was complete- where would the money come from for insurance breakdowns, running costs, etc.

Councillor Hart agreed; he was concerned about Legionella testing and the annual maintenance bills.

Councillor Rushton thought the area would become a fabulous 'trap' for kids at all hours of the day and night, querying what would happen to the lovely feature at night.

Councillor Davies asked if there were any prices.

Ms Poole confirmed that she had not been asked to look at this yet. This was a starting point and could be worked up or down. She then explained that paving costs varied and there would be different shades of paving, as at the new Health Centre to mark routes through the site.

Councillor Sheldon expressed concern about drainage for the paths, which currently flood.

Ms Poole noted that the water features can be turned off in the early evening. The birch trees would be retained as they were excellent pollution gatherers. Councillor Sheldon noted that Biddulph in Bloom looked after a section of planting at the site and felt that the two areas should be joined. There were currently 8 cars which used the spur road for parking.

Councillor Jackson said there was no need to make a decision on which plan. The first concern was to make a decision on the road. If it was closed then Station Road should be looked at- should it be made one way? We need to take a step forward; if the Town Council had to add money from the regeneration pot to make it happen, then so be it.

Councillor Davies aspired to take over the road. Ms Poole said a turning spur could be retained.

Councillor Hall felt it detrimental to have a line of parked cars in the middle of the space.

Councillor Davies noted that these were not legal parking spaces, many parked onto the pavement.

Councillor Sheldon pointed out that there were six businesses on that part of Station Road.

Councillor Davies reiterated that this was not simple; Sainsbury's owned the road and discussion was taking place about possibly leasing the area. The value of this concept design was that it would show what this Council would like to do, that it would aspire to have the whole site. There would be quite a lot to do in a short time frame; he would prefer to try for the whole site, with all the features and instruct Ms Poole to go out for costings.

Councillor Jones proposed Option 2 and that the Town Council lobby to take over the road. He was disappointed with comments in the newspapers suggesting that kids would spoil it and suggested that if this happened it could be dealt with, rather than deprive the whole town of the features. There would not be standing water in these fountains.

Councillor Whilding spoke about a water feature in Nottingham where adults can sit and kids can play in the water, the ground covering is anti-slip.

Councillor Hall proposed that the Committee accept these drawings and use them in further negotiations. This was seconded by Councillor Whilding. All agreed.

Councillor Davies thanked Ms Poole for attending and explaining the concept design.

Standing Orders were resumed.

29. CHRISTMAS TREES ON SHOP FRONTAGES

Councillor Davies wanted to brighten the streets at Christmas by erecting trees on the buildings in the High Street. The proposal stalled the previous year as buildings were not owned by the shopkeepers and there was insufficient time to locate and contact the owners. Councillor Hart proposed that this scheme goes

ahead for 2017, seconded by Councillor Wood. Further discussion would take place at the next meeting of the Christmas Lights sub-committee in September.

Councillor Jackson suggested stainless steel brackets as they would not rust and would look smart all year round.

Councillor Nicosia noted that this had been done on some buildings in previous years, so some of the brackets should still be intact.

Councillor Rogers noted that some had been flimsy and a sturdy bracket was needed.

Councillor Sheldon noted that some buildings had been coated and was concerned that drilling for the brackets might loosen some of the render.

30. WAR MEMORIAL RENOVATION

At a previous meeting, Mrs Elaine Rice had requested that the railings around the War Memorial be refurbished.

Suggestions were made to move the whole memorial 3-4 feet to the south, flatten the paved area and extend the railings to make the whole area user-friendly.

Councillor Jones had seen old photographs and there were no railings, he felt that the railings detracted from the monument and it would be acceptable to remove them altogether. A removable frame could be used for the wreaths.

Councillor Sheldon believed that the whole area had been cobbled at that time.

Councillor Hart felt that the right thing to do was to contact Mrs Rice.

Councillor Davies noted that Mrs Rice was keen on retaining the railings.

Councillor Wood would like the railings to be removed.

Councillor Davies was concerned about the fragility of the monument; moving it may cause it to disintegrate.

Councillor Nicosia noted that architectural drawings had been commissioned in 2015 and this Council had not moved forward since. She would prefer the monument to remain where it was and to extend the railings to the south, giving additional space for wreaths to be hung.

Councillor Jackson reminded Councillors of the photographs that were distributed at the last meeting of the damage to the memorial; if it was moved we may have a catastrophe on our hands, expert advice must be sought.

Councillor Davies felt that the possibility must be examined; it may be too fragile and too expensive.

Councillor Hall suggested consideration should be given to moving some of the clutter and street furniture which surrounded the memorial e.g. the post box.

Councillor Baddeley wondered why and when it had been put there.

31. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

- a) Pop-up Shops Working Group- Wednesday 6 September 2.00 pm
- b) Rent on garage agreed, a compromise had been reached.

Councillor Rogers wondered if consideration had been given to using the old toilet block on Wharf Road car park as a garage; the Chief Officer confirmed that she had contacted Property Services.

Councillor Rogers asked for an update on the weekly fruit and veg stall. The Chief Officer had received permission to use the Town Hall frontage on Fridays after the snagging to the building had been completed. The loading bay should also be available via a road closure order.

Councillor Jackson noted that the Biddulph Youth and Community Zone had recently facilitated an 'order and pick up' service for fruit and vegetables every Friday - £3 a bag.

The meeting closed at 8.08 pm

Signed Date