

MINUTES OF THE CIVIC COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 8 NOVEMBER 2016

PRESENT

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

39.16 APOLOGIES

Councillor Lovatt
Councillor Redfern

Councillor Davies opened the meeting by reminding Councillors that the Biddulph 2017 calendar was now available; there are also some new Biddulph torches.

40 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- a Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Dispensations: Councillor Sheldon in any matters concerning Biddulph in Bloom.
- b Other Interests: Minute 46 - Councillor Jones' wife works in Sainsbury's. Councillor Hall declared an interest in Rotary, in relation to the Christmas Lights Switch-On

41 MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** to sign the Minutes of the meeting of the Civic Committee held on 11 October 2016.

42 BIDDULPH HERITAGE

Councillor Davies stated that this Committee has previously approved heritage work within the town. At the last meeting of the Civic Committee there was discussion about making an application to the Moorlands Partnership Board in relation to Overton Road troughs and cross. Councillor Davies felt that this may also be a sensible time to consider other projects. This funding stream may not be around indefinitely, although there was no information that this was the case. As work is being carried out to complete one application for March 2017, others could also be included.

Councillor Jones proposed that Trent Head Well could be included. Councillor Hawley suggested that this could also be made more accessible with a kissing gate. Councillor Davies suggested that advice should be sought in relation to what could be included in a proposal.

Councillor Court suggested the 'vinegar trough' in Gillow Heath.

Councillor Sheldon queried how much progress had been made with the kissing gate. Councillor Davies stated that the ironwork is near completion, but that the Chief Officer is re-looking at the bridge as there will need to be a different contractor for this aspect of the project.

Councillor Sheldon stated that communities can register local heritage, and added that the Wharf Road buildings are worthy of attention and some of the shops on the High Street.

Councillor Davies asked Councillors to bring ideas forward in the next two weeks. We will need three estimates for the work and a concise specification. The Chief Officer can provide support with this.

43 CHRISTMAS LIGHTS UPDATE

Councillors had received the notes from the meeting on 19 October of the Christmas lights working group.

Councillor Davies provided an update about traders in the town. The Business Chamber had re-formed with a new Chair. It had been suggested previously that there was a pilot in the north of the town and that Christmas trees could be purchased for the fronts of shops; the Town Council would pay the majority of the costs, with some additional input. It seemed likely that this project would not go ahead this year. Traders would prefer that this was not limited to the north of the town, but funding is limited.

Councillor Jones queried whether Biddulph Moor could have Christmas trees on the three shops. Councillor Davies stated that this could be considered; the contribution would be £25 and they would need to install the trees themselves.

Councillor Jackson asked for further information about why the Christmas tree pilot would not be feasible. The Chief Officer stated that it was too late really. The new Chair had been incredibly pro-active, but most traders would have to seek permission to attach trees to the frontage, as they don't own the buildings. In addition, there is still some work needed on the banking arrangements for the Chamber.

Councillor Hart asked whether it was possible to make enquiries about the lights at Alsager; the traders seemed to be proactively involved in this.

Councillor Rogers queried when the meeting would be held with Paul Warwick. The Chief Officer confirmed that this would be on Friday.

44 UPDATE ON FINGERPOSTS

The Chief Officer circulated print-outs of the graphics.

Councillor Davies updated the Committee that we would also need to consider using a registered contractor to work on the Highways; the Neighbourhood Highways Team is not operating anymore.

Councillor Davies queried whether Councillors felt this was an appropriate time to consider the Biddulph in Bloom signage, celebrating their success, at the north/south of the town. Councillor Hart seconded this.

Councillor Jones queried where the signs will go. Councillor Davies stated that they would be located where the existing sign is at Rijos, the car park and outside the Town Hall; Biddulph Moor Councillors should advise where they would like the Biddulph Moor sign to be situated.

Councillor Baddeley suggested that the Victoria Centre needs a sign outside the building to identify it.

Councillor Salt suggested that the National Trust symbol could be added to the Biddulph Grange Gardens sign on Biddulph Moor; they may consider contributing to the cost.

Councillor McGuinness queried whether the Biddulph clematis logo could be added to the posts. Councillor Davies stated that this could be investigated.

Councillor Lawson stated that the library and toilets need to be on a different sign.

Councillor Sheldon stated that the Station Road Methodist Church could be included on the sign for the Victoria Centre.

Councillor Davies emphasised that there was some way to go, but that these ideas would be explored.

Councillor Court queried whether there was a tourist information sign; Councillor Jackson stated that there is one on John Street already.

Councillor Davies asked Councillors to consider the placement of signs.

45 BUDGET FOR 2016/2017

Councillors were given an updated spreadsheet with estimated expenditure, actual expenditure and expected outcome for 2016/17 to enable a review to take place and to assist with setting the budget for the next financial year.

Civic Expenditure was overspent as a result of the lighting columns work; this had been anticipated at the start of the financial year and money allocated appropriated.

Councillor Davies proposed that the expenditure should be the same for 2017/18; this was seconded by Councillor Wood. All agreed.

Councillor Salt asked about the Events Director post; Councillor Davies stated that it seemed likely that this would no longer be a cost of the Civic Committee.

Councillor Hawley asked why the market was overspent. Councillor Davies stated that the figure doesn't include market income, and reminded Councillors that the Civic Committee had proposed that a £2,000 overspend was appropriate as the market was perceived to be good for town. This overspend will not be necessary, however.

Councillor Baddeley stated that people miss Morning Fresh at the market. There was some discussion about this and Councillor Court suggested approaching Glebe Farm.

46 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

a) Councillor Davies updated Councillors that there was now clarity about the Station Road s.106 funding; there is £52,000 to improve the land, and this runs out in 2019. Councillor Davies had made enquiries at an SMDC meeting and was informed that the land now belongs to SMDC. Councillor Davies suggested that it may be a good time to consider getting estimates for shortening the road and turfing it. Councillor Hall proposed this course of action; seconded by Councillor Hart.

b) Councillor Rogers had spoken to Duncan Thomson at Sainsburys about the new Argos. Duncan is managing the store and not the construction, so has limited information about access arrangements. Councillor Rogers felt that access should be from the High Street, and not through the store.

Councillor Wood was disappointed that Sainsburys hadn't done more with the empty retail units on the High Street.

Councillor Salt suggested that Biddulph Town Council needs to meet someone higher in the organisation than Duncan.

Councillor Hall agreed; the manager is not in control. We should combine a meeting with Dai Lerner (SMDC) to review the original planning concept; this should be a three-way meeting to discuss how to progress.

Councillor Jones felt that Sainsbury's are not here to benefit Biddulph, but to make money. However, they have done a lot of good community work and have provided employment. We need to pressure them if we want more.

Councillor Jackson suggested that the Chief Officer search through the Regeneration Executive minutes to look at the promises that were made.

Councillor Salt felt that Sainsburys had a 'corporate social responsibility', and this should be mentioned when contacting them.

Councillor Sheldon was concerned that the steps are very dangerous.

Councillor Hall felt that Sainsburys have been very good for Biddulph and was confident they would engage in discussion. It is time to look at this again.

Councillor Rogers updated Councillors that the crossing is currently being done on the southern High Street. They appear to be doing a good job!

The meeting closed at 8.12 pm

Signed Date