

MINUTES OF THE CIVIC COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 8 JANUARY 2018

PRESENT

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

Also in attendance
Councillor Hawley
Councillor Nicosia

74.17 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from:
The Deputy Mayor Councillor McGuinness
Councillor Rushton

75. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- i. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests & Dispensations: None.
- ii. Other Interests: None.

76. MINUTES

- a) The Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 5 December 2017 were signed.
- b) The Minutes of the Christmas Lights Working Group meeting held on 14 November and 4 December 2017 were received.
Councillor Jones queried the payment to Mr Neville. The Events and Partnerships Officer noted that Mr Neville had used his own equipment had been excellent; the payment would be a donation to the Biddulph Moor Village Hall Fund on his behalf. This would be clarified in the minutes.
Councillor Rogers thanked members for the thanks and noted that traders on the north High Street had not stayed open for the event.
- c) The Minutes of the Cenotaph and Centenary Working Group meeting held on 11 December 2017 were received. Councillor Jackson proposed that the word 'moved' should be replaced with 'relocated' with reference to the post box adjacent to the Cenotaph; Councillor Jones noted that these were merely suggestions at this stage. Councillor Hall wondered if it could be relocated nearer to the Post Office

77. STATION ROAD UPDATE

Councillor Davies was pleased with the work which had been done by BP Architecture; 'Victoria Gardens' was the working name, any suggestions would be gratefully received. There were copies of the most recent version of the plans for Councillors to see. Plans had been submitted previously to the Operations Manager at the District Council, Ben Haywood, who had liked what he saw. The full planning application had been submitted that morning.

Councillor Jones expressed concern that he had not seen the plans or agreed them before the application had been submitted. This meeting should have taken place first.

Councillor Davies had been concerned that the S.106 money would be lost if swift action was not taken; there was only 15 months left to get the work done and dusted.

Councillor Jones felt it had been six months since he had seen any plans. Councillor Davies noted that the Ms Poole had presented the concept drawings for the design 3 months previously and had worked up the application from the 'wants list', incorporating them into this design.

Councillor Wood felt that a step had been jumped; it should come to the Committee for a decision. Councillor Davies apologised for the error of protocol.

Councillor Hart recalled that costings were awaited, he had been concerned about the costs and whether it would be affordable.

Councillor Davies noted that a costing sheet was being prepared. It was best to put in an application with everything that was wished for, rather than trying to add them at a later date; if part of the project proved too expensive it could be withdrawn.

Councillor Rogers noted that Ms Poole had left with a 'want sheet', all of which seemed to have been incorporated in the design.

Councillor Davies would ask for the application to be put on hold and bring the design to the next meeting of the Civic Committee.

Councillor Jones noted that this design may well be the one that this Committee wants; we need to sit with the architect and discuss them. Ms Poole would be invited to a later meeting.

Councillor Nicosia was concerned that the architect knew what was wanted but not what it would cost, but realised that it was better to put in a wish list.

Councillor Jackson asked for a clarification of the deadline for the S.106 funding, noting that this Council needed a 'red line' that states this the final day when the work must have started.

Councillor Davies was concerned that staged payments might confuse the issue. He noted that Sainsbury's was currently analysing who had used S.106 money.

Councillor Hart noted that if the contractor had physically started the work, this was a legal commitment, merely having submitted a planning application would not be enough.

Councillor Davies noted that the tabled papers would be emailed to all members before the next meeting.

78. FRESH FOOD FRIDAY AND ARTISAN MARKET UPDATES AND PLANS FOR 2018

Councillor Davies reported that there had been an increase in the overall loss as the garage rent had increased again. This was the only property available; the garage gave protection from vandalism, but the leaking roof was ruining the equipment.

Councillor Davies noted that there was a problem letting out the white gazebos as these had been completely ruined by mould. Pitch-only bookings had also increased. Councillor Davies proposed that the fee for a pitch is increased to £8 and that stall holders at Fresh Food Friday are also charged £8 per pitch; this would help to offset some of the costs.

There had been a steady increase in the number of stalls over the past year with people coming and buying, not just perusing. Footfall would be monitored in the coming year. Thought was being given to the introduction of a loyalty scheme. Councillor Davies asked Councillors to consider suitable sites where the trailers could be securely stored.

Councillor Rogers felt that the landlord should be made to repair the roof; the problem was that it was in a perfect position. He wondered if the toilet block on the Wharf Road car park could be used. Councillor Davies noted that there were ongoing enquiries about the toilet block. Councillor Hall felt that an official enquiry should be made, it would be convenient and the property would be brought back into use.

Councillor Nicosia asked what size would be needed, Councillor Davies responded that 27 x 20 feet was needed to accommodate the two trailers and tractor.

Councillor Hart was 'well impressed' with what the market was doing. He added that markets across the country were struggling, where ours was doing extremely well; the losses paled into insignificance in comparison to losses elsewhere. We need to find somewhere else to store the equipment. On occasion the sewer overflows, the sooner we get out the better. Councillor Hart added that the market was going really well. Fresh Food Friday had been a tremendous success, people liked it and the traders were doing really well. The lack of a butcher had been identified, Glebe Farm butcher had proved very popular when attending the monthly market before Christmas and people had been asking for it to be included in Fresh Food Friday.

Councillor Lawson wondered if a shed could be installed alongside the Town Hall for the market equipment. Councillor Davies responded that the site was not big enough, access would be difficult.

Councillor Jones noted that there was a massive empty garage at Biddulph Grange Country Park Visitor Centre; it was a shame that this could not be used, but there was no response from the District about the timescale for repairs.

Councillor Rogers wondered if Visqueen (polyethylene plastic sheeting) could be attached inside the roof to make it watertight.

The market would restart in March, Fresh Food Friday would resume on Friday 12 January 2018. Councillor Hawley wondered if it could be run. Councillor Davies said this could be considered.

The Chief Officer gave an update on the remainder of the tabled paper. The risk assessment had been reviewed and those issues previously identified had been addressed, with the exception of the garage. The risk assessment was included, for information.

Officers felt that four traders at Fresh Food Friday was sufficient for now, if there was a gap due to holidays etc. Attempts would be made to fill the space.

It was noted that a number of traders at the Artisan Market had started trading for the first time at the market, grown in confidence and gone on to start up new businesses; it was a positive 'new business initiative'. We had not expected this to be something that would happen, but Officers would continue to support anyone who wanted to try something different.

Councillor Hart moved that this Council becomes a member of the National Association of British Markets Authority (NABMA); another positive move. This was agreed.

It was noted that there had been positive feedback in the press, both about the market and Fresh Food Friday. These were also included, for information.

Councillor Davies reported that investment would be needed to replace some of the gazebo canopies at a cost of £100 each; it was noted that a replacement gazebo would cost in the region of £400. All agreed that this was appropriate.

79. ROUNDABOUT SCULPTURES

Councillor Davies reported that planning permission would not be needed for Biddulph in Bloom to install sculptures on the roundabout on Wharf Road, but a County Council permit would be required. It was not possible to issue this to a voluntary group, so would be issued to this Town Council who would take on the liability. Councillor Wood felt this was overkill.

Councillor Hart proposed that this Council takes up the licence. This was seconded by Councillor Jones and agreed.

80. SOCKETS AND LIGHTING OUTSIDE THE TOWN HALL

Councillor Davies noted that the contractor who had worked on the Town Hall had been commissioned to install additional sockets outside the Town Hall. The work had not been done. Councillor Davies wished to seek Councillors' approval that the Chief Officer would seek quotations to install the sockets and design a lighting scheme for the building. All agreed.

81. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Councillor Davies reported that the calendars had sold out.

Licences would be needed to drill holes to reinstall the Twinning mosaic and to install a television monitor in the foyer; there was no progress yet.

Councillor Davies felt that this building would benefit from Wi-Fi, members all agreed that it was necessary.

Councillor Hall noted that it had been agreed to install Wi-Fi once the building works were complete, he would chase this.

Councillor Hawley added that to input the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaires to Survey Monkey required Wi-Fi and so had to be done at home.

The Chief Officer also noted that this would help when Officers were marketing the Council Chamber.

The meeting closed at 8.20 pm

Signed Date