

MINUTES OF THE CIVIC COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 10 APRIL 2018

PRESENT

The Mayor – Councillor Wood
The Deputy Mayor Councillor McGuinness
Councillor Hall
Councillor Hart
Councillor Jones
Councillor Lawson
Councillor Rogers –Vice Chair
Councillor Sheldon
Councillor Whilding

Also in attendance
Councillor Harper
Councillor Hawley
Councillor Nicosia

104.17 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from:
Councillor Baddeley
Councillor Court
Councillor Davies
Councillor Rushton
Councillor Swift

105. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- i. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests & Dispensations: Councillor Sheldon anything pertaining to Biddulph in Bloom.
- ii. Other Interests: Councillors Jones, Salt and Whilding were members of the Royal British Legion. Councillor Salt was a board member of Biddulph Youth and Community Zone (BYCZ). Councillors Hart and Lawson were members of the Moorlands Partnership Board, Councillor Sheldon was Chair of the Moorlands Partnership Board. Councillor Hart was Destination Staffordshire representative for Staffordshire Moorlands.

106. MINUTES

- a) The Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 13 March 2018 were signed.
- b) The Minutes of the Cenotaph and Centenary Working Group meeting held on 19 March 2018 were received.

107. STATION ROAD UPDATE

The Station Road planning application had been passed. The Chief Officer had met with the architect, there were tasks to be completed and tender documentation was being developed. The Chief Officer noted that there was no information from Sainsbury's in relation to the lease, at present.

Councillor Salt asked about reports in the Chronicle by Councillor Lawson that he had received complaints about the project. Councillor Lawson had passed these to the Chief Officer. The Chief Officer noted that there had been a number of concerns expressed about the proposed fountains; the response given had been

that the specification has not been completed or decided, and fountains would only be installed if there were sufficient funds. People would be given the opportunity to consider these proposals when there was further information.

Councillor Jones felt that people jump to conclusions; he was frustrated with the attitude when this Council was trying to improve the town.

Councillor Nicosia felt that the idea of a fountain had conjured up all kinds of thoughts and some people had the wrong impression.

Councillor Wood stated that people were jumping on the bandwagon; it was disappointing that objections had been raised when nothing had been decided. It was an innovative idea and would attract people into the town. All issues would be addressed at the right time.

Councillor Whilding noted that there were lovely fountains in Nottingham; children loved them and there were no problems there, the kids should not be stereotyped.

Councillor Lawson felt it was a good idea and would probably work. However, elderly people had their views.

Councillor Jones stated that he would prefer a fountain like the one in Geneva!

Councillor Whilding felt that elderly people would take their grandchildren there.

108. TO CONSIDER JOINING 'DESTINATION STAFFORDSHIRE' TO PROMOTE ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE TOWN

Councillor Hart had sat on the Board for the past ten years, it was a very efficient organisation; a DMO- Destination Management Organisation. It targeted people to come to Staffordshire and increased visitor numbers. The number of jobs increased dramatically if visitors stayed overnight. Councillor Hart felt that the Officers of the Town Council now needed extra help to increase tourism; information could be included for a reasonable amount of money, which would make the attractions much more visible to the public. We would be the first Town Council to join Destination Staffordshire; Biddulph had a lot going for it, but we needed some extra help and advice

Councillor Rogers informed members that the cost would be £200 + VAT for a year's membership of the Gold package; he suggested a year's trial, then see what benefit it brought.

Councillor McGuinness noted that websites were the way forward and it was a worthwhile thing to do; he proposed applying for the Gold package for 12 months.

Councillor Jones could not see a reason not to do it, it gave access to a big audience and he supported the proposal.

Councillor Wood fully supported it and asked if it was County Council run. Councillor Hart confirmed that it was; there were one and a half Officers, with 483 members signed up. Councillor Wood asked if this Council would have direct input in relation to content, and was informed that it would.

Councillor Jackson was not against it, but asked what we would evaluate and how would we see the economic benefit. Many had aspirations about a hotel in Biddulph, making it more attractive. It was lacking in Biddulph which had one of the biggest attractions in North Staffordshire on its doorstep; this Council had tried to encourage visitors from the Grange to access other areas of the town for a number of years.

Councillor Rogers noted that the cost would be similar to one weeks advert in the Chronicle.

Councillor Nicosia felt it seemed positive, on the face of it.

Councillor Hart hoped it would encourage businesses to join; they can get one-to-one support very reasonably. This support may help increase B&Bs in the town.

Councillor Lawson felt that the Town Council should 'speculate to accumulate'. Advertising costs are astronomical; we could promote venues and put the town on the map.

Councillor Salt requested clarification in relation to the support available to businesses; this would only be available if they were members themselves.

The Chief Officer added that this Council would dictate the content of our pages, so we could advertise a business if we wanted; the social media package was very positive.

Councillor Nicosia asked the Chair of Tourism (Councillor Rogers) if this Council could work hand-in-hand with this organisation and bring in fresh initiatives for our tourism projects. Councillor Rogers believed we could 'give it a shot'.

Councillor Sheldon believed it would be an extra tool to publicise Biddulph and could be evaluated by the comments of visitors.

It was proposed by Councillor McGuinness and seconded by Councillor Jones to take Gold membership for one year, this was agreed. Councillor Hart abstained from the vote.

109. TO ACCEPT THE MOORLANDS PARTNERSHIP BOARD GRANT OFFER

The Chief Officer clarified the offer; these projects had all been discussed previously, but the Board had now met to approve the applications. £12,700 had been allocated to Biddulph. Biddulph Grange Country Park had received a grant offer of £10,000; the remainder had been given towards additional railings on the A527, the well at Tower Hill Road and the Gillow Heath Station development. A project plan would need to be developed to take the latter project forward. This Council should formally approve the grant conditions and return the agreement so that work can commence.

Councillor Wood asked if the Council would be required to match fund these projects, Councillor Hall responded that this had already been agreed and it was a requirement.

Councillor Jackson asked if it was time limited, Councillor Sheldon responded that it was, to ensure that people got on with the projects quickly.

Councillor Jones thanked Councillor Sheldon publicly for her tireless advocacy of Biddulph.

Councillor Hart noted that three Biddulph members on the Board helped get our share of the money.

Councillor Hall proposed to approve and accept the grant conditions. This was agreed. Councillor Hart abstained from the vote.

110. FEEDBACK ON YOUTH DISCO AT THE BIDDULPH YOUTH AND COMMUNITY ZONE AND NEXT STEPS

The Chief Officer reported that the Town Council had contributed to BYCZ inter-schools disco; a significant amount of year 5-8 pupils had attended. A small entrance fee had been charged, which would roll over to the next event. It had been a positive environment and a nice atmosphere. This Council had talked previously about holding the next event at the Town Hall, possibly during the summer term, which would be led by BYCZ; this would need volunteers to manage it effectively. The Chief Officer queried whether this was something that Councillors still wanted to consider.

Councillor Wood fully welcomed the youth of Biddulph into the Town Hall; it was an age group missed by the Biddulph Festival. The main hall was a great room (if marshalled properly); he welcomed it and more events for young people in the Biddulph Festival.

Councillor Jones would love a disco in the Town Hall. If elected, he would be Chair of the District Council in May and hoped to have a youth event in the Town Hall – as Chair it would be free of charge. He had spoken with PCSO Steve Powell who offered help with marshalling.

Councillor McGuinness suggested inter-schools activities could be held at the leisure centre, e.g. badminton.

Councillor Jackson was glad it had been a success; the town centre had been mooted and it would be good if the room could be free of charge. The Town Council should help financially to make it happen; he agreed with using the leisure centre too. The vast majority of young people were excellent.

Councillor Jones added that there was also a budget and officer support for the Chair of the District.

Councillor Lawson noted that young people would support an event if it was done properly.

Councillor Sheldon always emphasised that it was only a small minority, many were outstanding citizens.

Councillor Salt thanked Councillors for their support for BYCZ. 300 plus young people had attended this first event. She noted that the Festival 2018 did have young people's events and that inter-school sports were held at the Leisure Centre, including hockey and cricket. BYCZ also took some young people to boxing classes who were unable to afford the entrance fee.

111. VERBAL REPORT ON THE FIRST ARTISAN MARKET OF 2018/19

The Chief Officer reported that 26 traders had initially attended the market. However, a significant amount had left by lunchtime due to the weather. There

had been incredible gusts of wind and no charges had been requested from those who chose to leave early. An extensive risk assessment had been carried out for the market, and thought is being given to working out how to monitor wind speed effectively and to formalise the procedure. One of our gazebos had lost a leg. The Civic Committee had previously considered the purchase of another gazebo at a cost of £354 inc. VAT this financial year; the chief Officer queried whether this could now be purchased to replace the broken gazebo. This was proposed by Councillor Hart, seconded by Councillor Rogers and agreed

The next market coincides with Staffordshire Day celebrations; an update will be provided at the General Purposes Committee meeting.

112. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

1) Councillor Rogers allowed Councillor Nicosia to address the meeting.

Councillor Nicosia had approached Pastor Holdcroft about considering use of their very large car park which was adjacent to Knypersley First School, for school traffic in the mornings and afternoons. To comply with insurance policy, the top car park would need resurfacing before it could be used by outside bodies; this would cost a significant amount of money. Councillor Nicosia had signposted Pr Holdcroft to 'Safer Routes to School', which had funding available. Councillor Nicosia added that any help with raising the money would be welcomed.

Councillor Salt had spoken to Mark Holdcroft the previous year. Mrs Rourke – head at Knypersley First had approached the church and offered financial help, she invited the Chief Officer to investigate this further.

Councillor Wood noted that the school was in his ward and that some of the parking was ridiculous, and children were put in danger. He remembered when the church had previously offered parking for parents; a funeral was to take place and parents moved cones and parked, causing the funeral cortege much distress. However, the logistics of this should be investigated further.

Councillor Jackson thanked Councillor Nicosia; the attitude of the church has changed over time. He wondered if a group of interested parties should be set up to look at the parking problem and suggested inviting representatives of Staffordshire Police and staff at Roaches School to contribute. However, there would still be some people who would misuse the car park.

2) Councillor Rogers then raised the issue of bags of rubbish left on the County Council site of the Meadows School by travellers. He wondered if the County Council could do something about it.

Councillor Lawson would talk to the Highways team at Ladderedge.

3) Councillor Rogers then mentioned discussion that had taken place at a recent meeting of the Independent Group. The ongoing renovation of the Council Chamber had been discussed in much detail and Councillor Rogers asked the Chief Officer for an update on this. The Chief Officer reminded the Chair that this was the 'Chairman's Report' and not the 'Chief Officer's Report', and as such she was not prepared for this discussion. She noted that some of the remaining work was due to be completed by the caretakers and they had

been short-staffed for six months, with other responsibilities. She could approach them to discuss timescales and provide a further update on a future agenda.

Councillor Jones was concerned that the Chief Officer had been left to get on with it by herself with no steer or support from Councillors. It was agreed that this should be added to a future agenda.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

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 8.45 pm

Signed Date