

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 15 NOVEMBER 2016

PRESENT

The Mayor – Councillor Salt
Councillor Baddeley
Councillor Court
Councillor Davies
Councillor Hall
Councillor Harper
Councillor Hart
Councillor Hawley
Councillor Jones
Councillor Jackson
Councillor Lawson
Councillor Lovatt
Councillor McGuinness
Councillor Nicosia
Councillor Rogers
Councillor Rushton
Councillor Sheldon
Councillor Swift
Councillor Whilding

Also in attendance:
Councillor Harper

51.15 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence and reasons accepted were received from:

The Deputy Mayor – Councillor Wood
Councillor Walley

52 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- a Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Dispensations: Councillor Sheldon in any matters concerning Biddulph in Bloom. Councillor Hart relating to Local Plan site specifics
- b Other Disclosable Interests.

53 MINUTES

It was **Resolved** to sign the Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 18 October 2016.

54 TRANSPORT COORDINATOR UPDATE

Councillor Hart was pleased with how Councillor McGuinness was handling the job, and had also received good comments from other Councillors.

Councillor McGuinness reported that the Severn Trent works on Newpool Road were nearing completion and routes would be back to normal by the end of November 2016. New timetables would be issued in January 2017; route 93 would use Kingsfield Road. Councillor McGuinness thanked the representatives of the bus

companies who had taken the time to meet with himself and the Chief Officer. As a result changes were being made.

Councillor McGuinness circulated the current D & G timetable. Several of the pages had blank spaces. The company had offered these spaces free of charge to publicise Biddulph e.g. 'Visit Biddulph the Garden Town of Staffordshire by Bus' and 'Britain in Bloom Gold Winning Town'. The Town Council would provide the logos, they would do the artwork.

Councillor McGuinness queried the ownership of the bus shelter adjacent to Sainsbury's, noting that it was unlit which caused difficulties for evening users to read the timetable. The Chief Officer would make enquiries.

Councillor Rogers thanked Councillor McGuinness; he asked when the next print run was. Councillor McGuinness would find out and update members, he was thinking about adding something to the Spring and Summer 2017 edition.

55 BIDDULPH GRANGE COUNTRY PARK (BRIEFING NOTE ENCLOSED)

Councillor Hart noted that as he owned the land adjacent to the park, he would not attend the Country Park Working Group meetings. The Chief Officer gave an update from the meeting held in November. It was proposed that Biddulph Town Council would lead on any Lottery bid and report to this committee, the responsibility of ownership was with SMDC, a report should also be taken to an SMDC meeting in the New Year. The next Working Group meeting would be on 8 December to consider objectives and timescales.

Councillor Hall said that the park was extremely important, and this Council should take the lead. Councillor Hall proposed that Councillor Jones should Chair the meetings; this was seconded by Councillor McGuinness and all were in favour.

Councillor Jackson said that the Country Park was a 'jewel in the crown'; he was excited about the potential that it could be used more greatly with an increase in visitor numbers. He was pleased about the plan for funding; we hadn't applied as much as we could for lottery funding. He supported the initiative.

Councillor Jones said it was early days, but he was heartened that people wanted to open up the park and make more use of it. It would be kept as a wild area, not a formal garden, not too structured, with original features restored. It would be another attraction for Biddulph, he was encouraged and excited.

Councillor Hart thought it was encouraging that the café had been re-let and was busy, he thought this boded well.

Councillor Sheldon thought this was a wonderful opportunity for Biddulph to take and one not to be missed, she felt very excited to be part of this. We must be mindful, however, that the land is owned by SMDC who have full responsibility for the Grade One listing. There must be encouraged to maintain this appropriately.

56 KNYPERSLEY CLOCK- ADDITIONAL WORK

Smith of Derby has reported that on their last few visits to service the clock at Knypersley, they had to change time. This is because the clock does not have an auto-restart in the event of a power cut.

Councillor Nicosia noted that this was a prominent clock.

Councillor Rogers noted that it was our responsibility to maintain as one of the three public clocks in Biddulph. Councillor Hall stated that it was our responsibility to do the job properly, subject to finances being found. This was seconded by Councillor Rushton, all were in favour.

Councillor Hart pointed out that people pass this clock to get to three schools.

Councillor Jones felt that other quotes should be sought; the Chief Officer would do this. Councillor Hall thought that this should be attempted, but it was specialist work.

Councillor Hart summed up that the Town Council would progress this, following consideration by the Chief Officer of additional quotations.

57 LENGTHSMAN SCHEME IN 2017/18

The Chief Officer queried whether Councillors had a view as to how the scheme would move forward after the County Council Lengthsman scheme ends. Was it a scheme we valued in the town and could it be funded by the Town Council? Councillor Jackson cautioned that we should first identify what can and what cannot be done by a Town Council.

The Chief Officer had requested updates and would liaise with County Councillors Jackson and Lawson about the slow response from County Officers.

Councillor Jackson thought that if other parishes were interested, it would be more sensible to group together to move forwards, rather than each individual Council sorting a new scheme separately. Councillor Hart thought we should find out from the Parish Councils Association who is taking this forward. Councillor Rogers would ask for this to be added to the agenda for the next meeting of the Staffordshire Parish Councils Association

Councillor Jones proposed that we consider funding this most useful scheme and consider in the budget for 2017/18, seconded by Councillor Harper. All agreed.

58 SPRINGFIELD ROAD ALLOTMENTS

Councillor Sheldon reported that there would be a meeting on 17 November 2016 with representatives of Wood, Goldstraw and Yorath (WGY) and Beech's to discuss the start of the works. Councillor Hart noted that the work would be to tidy the site; the allotments would not be constructed at present, therefore the site should fall under the remit of the General Purposes (GP) Committee. Councillor Sheldon would report about the meeting of the 17 November to the December GP meeting.

Councillor Hart acknowledged that there would be maintenance costs to keep the site looking tidy. Councillor Jackson noted that he had met with gardening contractor Glendale, by chance, at the site 18 months ago and did not think it would be too burdensome to maintain the site. The Chief Officer would research costs to the same specification as the maintenance of the Biddulph Valley Park area.

The Allotment and the Burial Grounds Committees would make recommendations to the December GP for budget setting. An additional line would be included for Springfield Road in 2017/18 Accounts

59 BUDGET FOR 2017/18

Councillor Hall said that he and Councillor Jackson would not take part in this decision as Chair and Vice Chair of the Finance Committee.

It was proposed by Councillor Salt and seconded by Councillor Sheldon that the Springfield Road site would come under the remit of the General Purposes Committee, as allotments on that site were not affordable for the foreseeable future.

Councillor Salt wondered if the Contingency figure could be reduced if it had not been called upon in the last few years.

After much discussion it was proposed by Councillor Lovat and seconded by Councillor Jones that the budgets remain the same with £5,000 for a Lengthsman Scheme and £5,000 in Contingency. This was agreed, Councillor Salt voted against and Councillor Hall abstained.

60 CHIEF OFFICER'S REPORT

1 Diversion of Vehicular Traffic

Henley Avenue

28 November- 9 December, the length of Henley Avenue between its junctions with Newpool Road and Birch Avenue. Water main renewal works.

2 Police and Crime Commissioner Updates

A Youth Commission has been established, made up of 27 young people between the ages of 14 and 25. The aim is to get young people involved in shaping the future of policing. The young people have now identified their six priorities. These will feed into the emerging PCC Safer, Fairer, United Communities Strategy.

3 Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Smart Alert

There is a new app that provides free crime alerts and safety advice, available at www.staffordshiresmartalert.uk

4 Smart meters

The Community Council of Staffordshire has joined with Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) and Smart Energy GB to help communities benefit from smart meters. There will be promotional events, local coordinators, printed material and training for volunteers. Every home in Great Britain will be offered a smart meter, at no additional cost, by 2020.

Councillor Jackson had heard adverse publicity about smart meters

5 Enquiry from Roaches School

The Chief Officer received a letter from students at the Roaches School. They are campaigning for a zebra crossing between Sainsbury's and Home Bargains. The letter is available if Councillors would like to view it.

Councillor Rogers responded that Sainsbury's would not remove part of their fence to give access to the site as they would lose car parking spaces. This was a complicated issue.

The meeting closed at 8.58 pm.

Signed Date