

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BIDDULPH TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 17 JANUARY 2017

The Town Crier introduced the Town Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Chief Officer; he then invited Pastor Amy Wyatt to lead members in a time of prayer. The Mayor opened the meeting.

PRESENT

The Mayor – Councillor Salt
The Deputy Mayor – Councillor Wood
Councillor Baddeley
Councillor Court
Councillor Hall
Councillor Harper
Councillor Hawley
Councillor Jones
Councillor Jackson
Councillor Lawson
Councillor Nicosia
Councillor Redfern
Councillor Rogers
Councillor Sheldon
Councillor Swift
Councillor Walley
Councillor Whilding

53.16 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr Terry Barber, Secretary of Biddulph Film Club, was invited to address the meeting. Mr Barber had asked to speak about the refurbishment work proposed for the Town Hall and the need for better advertising space there, and in other places in Biddulph.

Mr Barber said that half the population of Biddulph was in a state of anxiety, having waited for 10 months to hear about the refurbishment of the Town Hall. People did not know where to pay their council tax; some offices were moving location and no information had been given out.

Voluntary and community groups in the town were well under way with preparations for the annual Biddulph Festival to be held throughout July. Biddulph Film Club had scheduled a film to be shown as part of the Festival, and Mr Barber needed to know whether or not to go ahead with the booking – he was still waiting for information from the District Council. Mr Barber emphasised that this was just one example.

Mr Barber also spoke about the lack of advertising space in the town centre; the space for community groups in Sainsbury's had been taken out to make way for the new in-store Argos. There was only one board left; this was outside the Town Hall and in cold weather it suffered with condensation on the inside of the glass. Mr Barber thought that the town needed an advertising board above the new entrance to Councils Connect; an electronic display, with a rolling screen of information. People could use it to advertise their events. Mr Barber noted that some shops, such as the Post Office and GP surgeries used this type of display to good effect. Now

that the Town Hall was in the process of modernising; this would be great opportunity. Councillor Hall gave an update; the refurbishment work should begin on 27 February 2017 lasting for 22 weeks.

Councillor Salt asked District Councillors to bring Mr Barber's concerns to the attention of the relevant individuals at the Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.

Councillor Rogers expressed frustration at the delay and believed that the issue was the proposed glass frontage. He added that there would be 60 or so events in the Festival, and the delay and lack of information was making it difficult to produce the brochure.

Councillor Salt proposed that discussion is deferred to the next meeting of the Civic Committee and Mr Barber was invited to attend that meeting, where it was hoped that further information would be available. Councillor Hall would contact SMDC Customer Services prior to that meeting.

Councillor Lawson expressed concern about the weather and the need for the job to be done properly; timescales should have been discussed.

Councillor Baddeley has seen a press release in Biddulph Chronicle which stated that the Town Hall would be available for most of the time that the works were being carried out, but for some of the time access would be gained via the rear of the building. Councillor Wood concurred adding that the car park would be out of use, but access would be via the side entrance from the car park, he was under the impression that the Festival would be unaffected.

Councillor Jones proposed that SMDC is contacted for clarification that for the 22 weeks of the project the Town Hall would still be in use, not out of commission. Councillor Jones was sure that there would be a project plan to say if and when the hall was not able to be used. He noted that it was a year from the first date given for the work, and the situation was unchanged. Councillor Jones was opposed to a flashing advertising sign and asked if information was available about the reinstatement of the Sainsbury's advertising boards. Councillor Jones thought that community events should be advertised in the Town Hall and SMDC should ensure that there was space.

Mr Barber responded that Biddulph no longer had a cinema, theatre etc. The Town Hall was being used to replicate them and therefore needed significant advertising space in the new foyer.

Discussion would take place at the February meeting of the Civic Committee, the Chief Officer would seek the views of the District Council about advertising on the outside of the building and in the foyer.

54. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Dispensations. Councillor Sheldon in any matters concerning Biddulph in Bloom
- b) Other Disclosable Interests: Councillor Hall declared an interest as a member of Rotary, in any discussion about the gazebo at the Woodhouse Burial Ground.

55. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence and reasons accepted were received from:

Councillor Davies
Councillor Hart
Councillor Lovatt
Councillor McGuinness
Councillor Rushton

56. MINUTES

- a It was Resolved to approve and sign the Minutes of the meeting of the Town Council held on 13 December 2016
- b The Minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 13 December 2016 were received. Councillor Hawley was in attendance but was not a member of the committee.
- c The Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting held on 9 January 2017 were received.
- d It was Resolved to receive the Minutes of the Human Resources Committee Meeting held on 10 January 2017.
- e It was Resolved to approve the Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on 10 January 2017, Councillor Salt had left the meeting between Minutes 21 and 22 and did not return. Councillor Redfern abstained from the vote on the Precept budget.

57. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

- a In his absence, an email had been received from PCSO Sherratt – there had been several incidents at Biddulph Moor.
- b The Mayor reported that she had been contacted by an individual who had received a letter from the County Council stating that it would no longer maintain certain equipment for disabled people e.g. stair lifts. However, hoists would still be maintained; the individual was upset and wanted to form an action group. The Mayor was not happy that cuts were proposed and wanted to make fellow Councillors aware of this letter.

Councillor Jackson thanked the Mayor for bringing this up; he had been contacted by the same individual. The issue had been discussed at the County Council Labour Group. Councillor Jackson was concerned that a disabled person would not be able to access a working hoist if their stair lift was not working. He felt that the County Council might look at individual cases; ordering replacement equipment where parts were no longer available. Councillor Jackson was concerned that this action was merely moving the problem; he thought that disabled groups should band together to protest about the cuts in maintenance to vital equipment.

Councillor Jackson had already questioned the validity of insurance if County Council equipment was repaired by a private company; he was unclear when the final decision had been made. Councillor Lawson said it had been a recommendation by Cabinet and would go before full Council in February.

The Mayor felt that this Council should back the residents. Councillor Wood proposed that a letter is sent expressing our concerns about this decision which could lead to the isolation of people in their own homes. Councillor Wood added that he understood that there would be a process of scrutiny. Councillor Nicosia suggested sending a letter to Karen Bradley MP; the Mayor responded that this had already been done

c Twinning Race Night

This year is the 30th Anniversary of the Twinning Association and school children and adults will all visit Biddulph from Fusignano. The Race Night will be held at Knypersley Cricket Club 3 February 2017, tickets £5.

d The Mayor would be holding a fundraising fair at Methodist Church on Saturday 25 February 2017, anyone wanting a stall should contact Councillor Salt. That evening, they Mayor would host a thank you event for all the volunteers in the town.

e The Mayor's Civic Ball would take place on Friday 28 April 2017, tickets at £30 each would be on sale soon – 'save your pennies!'

58. YOUTH ADVISOR MEETING REPORT

The Chief Officer reported that students from The Roaches, James Bateman Junior High and Woodhouse Academy had attended. Antony Capostagno from the Biddulph Youth and Community Zone was also present, with two young leaders. Gillian Reynolds spoke about Fairtrade Fortnight and encouraged everyone to take part.

Other items discussed were the restoration projects that the Civic Committee are considering, and the protection of heritage in the town. The Chief Officer had also explained the idea of giving grants and had asked for feedback. The next meeting would be held in March, due to half term.

59. APPROVAL OF REVISED STANDING ORDERS

This document had been circulated. The amended sections reflected the revised Financial Regulations and the recently developed Procurement Policy. This was Approved.

60. ACCOUNTS & FINANCE

a) The following accounts were received for payment:

V Brown – Events Director	787.92
Brian Carter – Woodhouse gates	40.00
Protech Electrical Limited – replacement timer Askey and Sutcliffe lamppost	126.00
Protech Electrical Limited – replacement timer Crown and Cushion lamppost	126.00
Heads (Congleton) Ltd – Events and Partnerships Officer advert week 1	80.64
Heads (Congleton) Ltd – Events and Partnerships Officer advert week 2	80.64

SMDC – 8 wheeled waste bins at Christmas Lights switch on	43.20
SMDC – lease of land at Congleton Road	90.00
SMDC – lease of Room 8	175.00
Kent County Council – copier rental	582.65
S Haydon – travel – conference at Lichfield	36.27
Go Daddy - web hosting annual renewal and domain renewal– credit card	116.64
Staffs Pension Fund	1333.29
Salaries	3546.77
HMRC direct debit to be paid 1 February 2017	1427.19

b) Finance Committee Recommendation (10 January 2017)

To **approve** the Accounts to 31 December 2016 and to **approve** the Precept request of £272,924.75 (two hundred and seventy two thousand, nine hundred and twenty four pounds and seventy five pence only), with budget proposals for 2017/18.

All approved these figures, with associated documents.

EXPENDITURE			
	Actual Expenditure 2015-16	Budget 2016-17	Proposed Budget 2017- 18
General Administration			
Audit Fees	992.60	1,000.00	1,000.00
Elections	5,066.03	5,016.00	5,100.00
Office costs	4,840.11	5,000.00	6,000.00
Room Rent - District Council	24,822.61	20,000.00	25,000.00
Salaries/pensions	93,127.00	81,500.00	95,000.00
Subscriptions	1,613.00	1,600.00	1,600.00
Sundry	881.02	800.00	1,000.00
Training	400.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
VAT	6,010.17	8,000.00	8,000.00
Sub total	137,752.54	123,916.00	143,700.00
Civic Committee			
Christmas Lights	17,873.49	21,000.00	23,000.00
Civic Allowance	4,165.00	4,165.00	4,165.00
Civic Expenditure	3,578.37	12,000.00	12,000.00
Festival	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00
Remembrance Sunday S.137	45.28	100.00	100.00
Events Director	8,919.96	9,455.00	0.00
Events Budget	749.45	1,000.00	0.00
Artisan Market	4,369.82	4,000.00	5,000.00
Regeneration	161.05	25,000.00	25,000.00
Tourism	0.00	2,000.00	2,000.00

Sub total	44,862.42	83,720.00	76,265.00
Finance Committee			
Grants (inc. CAB and Biddulph in Bloom)	60,484.95	66,000.00	66,000.00
Sub total	60,484.95	66,000.00	66,000.00
General Purposes Committee			
Allotments	1,380.47	5,000.00	5,000.00
Contingency	0.00	5,000.00	5,000.00
Lengthsman	5,970.00	5,000.00	5,000.00
Burial Grounds Maintenance	27,007.19	20,000.00	25,000.00
Sub total	34,357.66	35,000.00	40,000.00
Planning Committee			
Footpaths	500.00	500.00	500.00
Footway Lighting	2,464.18	5,000.00	5,000.00
Sub total	2,964.18	5,500.00	5,500.00
TOTAL	280,421.75	314,136.00	331,465.00

INCOME

	Actual Income 2015-16	Estimated Income 2016-17	Estimated Income 2017-18
Artisan Market	2,705.00	2,500.00	2,500.00
Room Hire	750.00	500.00	500.00
Burial Ground	31,059.29	26,000.00	32,000.00
Allotments	687.00	550.00	500.00
Christmas Market	390.00	300.00	350.00
Interest (bank accounts)	992.53	600.00	1,000.00
VAT refund	13,478.86	8,000.00	8,000.00
Lengthsman	6,185.00	5,000.00	5,000.00
Promotional Sales	151.07	200.00	500.00
General Admin	4.19	0.00	100.00
Support Grant	19,905.07	13,982.59	8,090.25
Precept	236,280.00	256,503.00	
TOTAL	312,588.01	314,135.59	58,540.25

Councillor Nicosia clarified that lantern parade materials had cost a total of £265.98

The meeting closed at 7.50 pm

Signed Date.....