

MINUTES OF THE CIVIC COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 8 JULY 2014

PRESENT

The Mayor – Councillor Swift
Deputy Mayor – Councillor Adams
Councillor Baddeley
Councillor Davies
Councillor Deane
Councillor Gibson
Councillor Hall
Councillor Harper
Councillor Hart
Councillor Redfern
Councillor Rogers
Councillor Sheldon MBE
Councillor Whilding
Councillor Wood

8.14. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from:
Councillor Deaville
Councillor Ellsum
Councillor Jones
Councillor Jackson
Councillor Lovatt

9. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- a Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Dispensations: Councillor Sheldon declared an interest in Minute 11.14: as Chair of Biddulph in Bloom
- b Other Interests: none were declared

10. MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** to sign the Minutes of the meeting of the Civic Committee held on 9 June 2013.

11. TOURISM COMMITTEE REPORT

Councillor Rogers gave a verbal report on the business discussed at the Tourism Committee earlier that evening. This concerned the proposal to produce a promotional leaflet of the town and its events and of the idea for the 2015 calendar to have a theme of Biddulph in Bloom and for any profits to go to that charity. It was suggested that walking routes could also be included in the promotional leaflet. The Chair asked that any photographs for the calendar to be submitted electronically, please.

12. ROOMS AT THE TOWN HALL

The Chair recapped that the District Council was reviewing all of its assets currently and there had been a report that the town hall was making a substantial loss. There were three main tenants (the Town Council, the police and Staffordshire County Council's social care teams) plus a small amount of revenue for room bookings by the community. It had come to light that the police were considering leaving the building, as the accommodation was not suitable, and had been offered space adjacent to the fire station in the old

ambulance station. This would suit them quite well as they often worked in conjunction with the fire service. However, there was also a strong need for them to remain in the town centre and officers worked frequently with social workers in the town hall. Senior police officers had identified that they needed a public desk, better access to their vehicles, male and female changing facilities and more space.

Officers from the District Council had organised a recent meeting with the Town Council to discuss working on re-ordering the building to better suit all users, as the County Council had also expressed a desire to have improved facilities. The District Council would like the Town Council to become involved in working together on the re-allocation of space to benefit all parties. They had engaged a property specialist from the County Council who was currently looking at all of the space and would make some suggestions.

Members discussed this and felt that the Town Council should be part of the decision making process and they stressed that it was of paramount importance to satisfy all tenants, as they would not be easy to replace and this could threaten the future of the building. It was pointed out that some towns had lost their town halls. The building was currently not energy efficient and this could perhaps be an opportunity to improve this. It was suggested that a small working group could come up with some proposals.

Councillor Harper proposed that the Town Council engaged with the District Council to work on changing the spaces within the building and this was seconded by Councillor Hall. A vote was taken and members were unanimously in favour of taking an active role in this work.

13. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

- a The Chair reported that the Wharf Road car park steps legal issues had not yet been resolved, but that some progress had been made.
- b The street lighting scheme had not progressed at all, due to inaction from the contractor. It was moved to write a letter from this Committee expressing extreme dissatisfaction regarding the contractor's performance. It was felt that the haphazard nature of the work, the failure to get the columns ready in time for the Britain in Bloom judges visit and the lack of contact was very poor. The letter also to be copied to the County Council street lighting team.
- c We had now received one quote for the re-lettering of the war memorials and the Chief Officer was pursuing a second. In the meantime, the Chair proposed that the memorials be cleaned with a proprietary stone cleaner and water by the Lengthsman. This was approved.
- d Councillor Sheldon announced that the Britain in Bloom judges would be in the town on Thursday 24 July and said that the team would be extremely grateful for any assistance with weeding/litter picking prior to that morning.

The meeting closed at 7.35 pm

Signed Date