

MINUTES OF THE CIVIC COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 10 FEBRUARY 2015

PRESENT

The Mayor – Councillor Swift
Deputy Mayor – Councillor Adams
Councillor Baddeley
Councillor Davies: Chair
Councillor Gibson
Councillor Hall
Councillor Harper
Councillor Hart
Councillor Jackson
Councillor Redfern
Councillor Rogers: Vice Chair
Councillor Sheldon MBE
Councillor Whilding
Councillor Wood

Mr J Robinson – Town Crier

48.14 APOLOGIES

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

49. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- a Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Dispensations: none were declared
- b Other Interests: none were declared.

50. MINUTES

- a It was **RESOLVED** to sign the Minutes of the meeting of the Civic Committee held on 12 January 2015.
- b It was **RESOLVED** to receive the Minutes of the meeting of the Tourism Committee held on 12 January 2015.

51. MOORLANDS PARTNERSHIP BOARD FUNDING

- a) Uplighter for the town hall trees
The Chair said that as we cannot do more work on the frontage of the town hall until we know what was to happen to the building, we could progress the uplighting scheme for the two lime trees.

Councillor Sheldon said that we now needed to promote projects to access Moorlands Partnership Board (MPB) funding for the good of the town; the criteria had recently changed and we could now apply for Environmental Enhancement grants. Councillor Hart added that he had checked and there would be no changes to MPB from April onwards. We could go ahead with the application funding for 50% of the project cost, up to a maximum of £4,000.

Councillor Jackson felt that it would be useful for members who sit on the Board to ask for a list of past funding and where it went to. It would be very interesting to see how much Biddulph has had over last 7 years.

The Chair commented that, thankfully, the rules have changed so we can now put projects forwards. Councillor Hart said that, previously, much of the funding was from the Heritage Lottery and we were not eligible as we have no Conservation areas. Councillor Sheldon added that there had been a lot of applications from parishes all over the Moorlands.

It was agreed to obtain estimates for the uplighters for the next meeting.

b Town centre pole mounted banners

Councillor Sheldon said that many towns now have advertising on flags and pennants, often on the lighting columns and added that she felt this would be a useful thing for us to have for various events.

Councillor Jackson thought that siting may be an issue, but we had spoken about an electronic information board some time ago for the town centre. This could be another means of communications to think about

Councillor Sheldon had earmarked sites on the corner of High Street and South View (by Murray's) and opposite the War Memorial; alternatively the A527 verges on Meadows Way – possibly on the Sainsbury site. However, she had not yet done a detailed study.

Councillor Rogers asked who was going to have the job of changing banners. Councillor Wood assumed we would be able to change the information, and the Chair responded that yes, but there would be cost implications. He felt we should look at the two sites in more detail.

Councillor Jackson said we would have to be aware of any noise implication, particularly near any residential premises and Councillor Harper brought up the problem of street clutter.

The Chair proposed that we start with just one at South View and all were in favour.

c Re-design of War Memorial area

The Chair reported that following the initial idea being put forwards, some costs of designing the scheme had now been obtained. These ranged from £300 for an initial concept design to £1,300 for the full service, including technical design and site works.

Councillor Harper said again that street clutter was a problem in the War Memorial area and Councillor Jackson said we must ensure we involve the local British Legion members.

Councillor Hall said that it was important to gain an initial view to give us a focus and it was Moved to request an initial concept design from a local architect.

52. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

With a view to obtaining MPB funding, the Chair had been looking at heritage sites and taken up the project of the old Robert Heath iron railings at Congleton Road, near Lea Forge, where there was a bridge with dangerous railings and a

dilapidated kissing gate. Also further north was another kissing gate and footbridge, in a similar poor state of repair. Councillor Davies had obtained some costs and needed to get the information to the MPB for 17th March. He would like to bring these to next meeting of this committee.

Councillor Wood said that he would like to gain some environmental improvements for paths in the West Ward. He felt that the concept was fine, but that all areas should be included. The Chair replied that this was the first of several projects to be put forwards and Councillor Sheldon added that they were being looked at as these are historic kissing gates; councillors were trying to look at urgent conservation projects first.

Councillor Hart informed the meeting that Robert Heath's ironworks had probably made dozens of these, but that they were being lost over time. Those two are very visual, on the main road, but are falling to pieces.

Councillor Jackson added that he had no problem with project due to its historical value but wondered if the new housing development at Forge works would make contributions? Councillor Sheldon said that she had already asked.

The Chair said that the well on Tower Hill Road had been damaged and could be a future project and Councillor Sheldon said that she had a list of work needed on the seven Biddulph wells. All were in need of conservation and possible protection, but she was a bit put off by the amount of work involved. She informed members that Cheshire East Council had repaired the well by the bridge at Whitemore for us!

Councillor Hall said that we have to start somewhere and that the whole of Biddulph would benefit from the work on the gates. This was not the end – just the easiest to start with. He added that we have an exceptionally good stone carver in the town who could do the well restoration work and Councillor Sheldon stressed the need for preservation for their social value.

The meeting closed at 7.40pm

Signed Date