

MINUTES OF THE CIVIC COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 14 JULY 2015

PRESENT

The Mayor – Councillor Baddeley
The Deputy Mayor – Councillor Salt
Councillor Hall
Councillor Hart
Councillor Jackson
Councillor Lawson
Councillor Redfern
Councillor Rogers
Councillor Rushton
Councillor Sheldon MBE
Councillor Swift
Councillor Whilding
Councillor Wood

8.15. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from:
Councillor Jones
Councillor Lovatt
Councillor McGuinness

9. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- a Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Dispensations: none were declared
- b Other Interests: Reference Minute 11.15 Councillor Salt as member of Royal British Legion; Councillor Harper as member of War Memorials Trust

10. MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** to sign the Minutes of the meeting of the Civic Committee held on 8 June 2015.

11. WAR MEMORIAL PUBLIC REALM WORKS

Councillor Davies welcomed Beverley Poole of bpArchitecture to the meeting who spoke of the design concept. They had looked at how people moved around that area, adjusted and realigned the barriers and created proper pedestrian areas. The design showed a smaller more formal planting zone, re-used the cobbles. The planting zone was around the immovable street furniture and thus created space for events; seating for the restaurant etc. Trees were suggested for the opposite pavement – silver birches which suck pollution. Flagpoles were suggested on CCTV pole and lamp post and the signage could be re-configured.

Councillor Salt expressed concern about higher kerbs at the wreath laying ceremony on Remembrance Sunday. Ms Poole suggested consideration of lifting the road to create shared space, as in Poynton.

Councillor Rogers asked if the tables were for the benefit of the café and Ms Poole replied that the owners were interested in contributing towards the scheme. Councillor Baddeley felt that Remembrance Sunday was a very solemn occasion and she thought that tables would be disrespectful.

Councillor Rushton commented that the plan looked larger than the actual area, but Ms Poole replied that it was to scale.

Councillor Hall said that we still have the problem of all the street signs and Ms Poole felt that we would need to condense the information on them.

Councillor Sheldon said that the planting would be easier to maintain than the grass at present.

Councillor Salt spoke about the wreaths – they currently sit inside the railings for 2 to 3 months. Would they get kicked about? Councillor Sheldon replied that at some memorials they have a wooden structure to house them after the ceremony.

Councillor Hart commented that we would have to hold the restaurant responsible for smoking detritus in the area and the Chair said they would be required to apply for a premises licence, which would make them responsible for street cleansing in this area.

Councillor Jackson felt that it could be tight for space on Remembrance Sunday, and needed to be looked at carefully. He felt that the barriers were needed to protect people sitting in this area.

Councillor Lawson responded to the Mayor's point, saying that he felt it would not be disrespectful to have an outside area for taking coffee, but that this would enhance the town. Raising the road level would, however, be a huge cost.

Ms Poole felt railings should be retained opposite Albert Street, but possibly bollards on the other side. Councillor Salt said that the scheme would work if one metre of railing on north side was removed. Councillor Hart commented that Councillor Wood had suggested removable barriers.

The Chair thanked Ms Poole for coming along to show these plans, this was an excellent start.

12. KISSING GATES & RAILINGS PROJECT

The Chair reported that we had not been successful with the funding application to the Staffordshire County Council. We were still awaiting a safety check on the southern footbridge, assisted by the District Council. We could pursue a Heritage Lottery Grant but the landowners would need to apply. Councillor Hall proposed going forwards with this

Councillor Sheldon felt that it would be a shame to lose out on Moorlands Partnership Board funding and the Chief Officer would make sure that grant would still be available.

Councillor Wood said that he was worried that we kept bringing new projects forwards and the Town Council would be expected to fund them. The Chief Officer said that the Council held substantial balances and must ensure it used them. It was not good practice to hold public money for unspecified purpose. Councillor Salt said that we now have £100,000 in the Projects budget for this purpose.

Councillor Jackson agreed that if Heritage Lottery was not forthcoming the Council should agree to proceed with funding from the Projects budget. He

added there were so many different lotteries around now that perhaps we should be looking at these to what funding streams were available.

Councillor Sheldon would be confidence boosting to go ahead with this project. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Jackson and a vote was taken with all in favour.

13. WHARF ROAD CAR PARK FOOTPATH

Councillor Davies said that a path had worn across the grass into the car park from South View by the public. He suggested that this should be formalised into a proper path and the Town Council should gain some quotes for this.

Councillor Sheldon pointed out that the District Council owned this land and had ignored her questions about it. The Chief Officer agreed to raise this with Property Services officers.

Councillor Sheldon said that the whole grassed area was very dangerous – there are old building footings never removed, and that there always was a path there.

14. SHOPPERS SURVEY

Councillor Salt spoke of concerns felt by her and Councillor Nicosia, Residents had asked both of them separately what the Town Council was doing about the closure of shops in the town. They would like to conduct a shopper's survey on Saturday 18 July at Biddulph by the Sea to see where people were coming from, when they came and why. Councillors felt that this would be a good idea, as long as the questions were confined to shopping habits.

Councillor Redfern asked whose property the results would be and to be aware that any data used could only be used for that purpose. The Chair felt they should go back to the Tourism Committee. Councillor Salt assured members that she had written several studies and was aware of how data should be handled.

Councillor Hart commented that a retail study had been commissioned by the District Council in 2013, showing that shopping habits had changed since the opening of Sainsbury's. He was concerned that questions should only relate to retail. Councillor Salt added that they would and said that as new councillors, she and Councillor Nicosia wished to make themselves visible to their electorate.

Councillor Jackson said that he considered that Councillors were **very** visible, asking how many people would be conducting the survey. He felt it would be useful to compare data with that of two years ago.

Councillor Salt said that, as new Councillors, they felt the need to be visible to those electing them and that any other member would be more than welcome to join them on Saturday. Councillor Nicosia said that they want to be able to voice concerns expressed to them, as new Councillors, and sought an opportunity to present themselves.

Councillor Jackson added that High Streets are successful when people have jobs and money in their pockets.

Councillor Hall said that he was all for this initiative; a very good idea and only the start. We could also think of extending this to those who don't come into town via social media. There were possibilities to slowly develop.

Councillor Nicosia added that Biddulph is going to grow in size, that people need resources and that we need a High Street to bring them here.

Chair reminded members that this was primarily a shopping survey, thanking the councillors for their initiative

15. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

- a The lighting columns had now been painted, since receipt of the letter of complaint. They looked very good and a letter of apology had been received from a senior manager at E.on.
- b The Vice Chair thanked Councillor Lawson for getting the roundabout repaired so promptly. The repair was instant, but the Thames Drive roundabout had now started to break up. There was also still the problem of the hole in north High Street – pressure from all sides to get this repaired.

Councillor Hall reported the High Street/South View raised table; the bricks on sewer cover were loose.

The meeting closed at 8.14 pm.

Signed Date