

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 20 OCTOBER 2015

PRESENT

The Mayor - Councillor Baddeley
Councillor Court
Councillor Hall
Councillor Hart
Councillor Lawson
Councillor Lovatt
Councillor McGuinness
Councillor Rushton
Councillor Sheldon
Councillor Swift
Councillor Walley
Councillor Whilding

Also in attendance:
Councillor Rogers
Councillor Harper
Councillor Hawley
Councillor Redfern

52.15. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence and reasons accepted were received from:
The Deputy Mayor - Councillor Salt
Councillor Davies
Councillor Jackson
Councillor Jones
Councillor Nicosia

Councillor Hart noted that Councillor Harper would like to be a member of this Committee once again.

53. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- a Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Dispensations: none were declared.
- b Other Disclosable Interests: Councillor Sheldon in any matters concerning Biddulph in Bloom.

54. MINUTES

- a It was **Resolved** to sign the Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 15 September 2015.
- b It was **Resolved** to receive the Minutes of the Allotment sub-Committee meeting held on 30 September 2015.
- c It was **Resolved** to receive the Minutes of the Burial Grounds sub-Committee meeting held on 13 October 2015

55. WOODHOUSE BURIAL GROUND/MEMORIAL BOWLING GREEN SHED

Item deferred from the last meeting of the Burial Grounds Sub-Committee, following a request from Bowling Club members for shared ownership of a storage shed to be sited at the bowling green

The Chief Officer had spoken with the gravediggers about their possible storage requirements – boards, a mini digger and a wheelbarrow were suggested. No response had been received from the SMDC planning officers regarding permission to site the shed.

Councillor Swift expressed the concerns of the bowling green committee regarding mixing muddy items with sensitive electronic equipment which had been expensive. He added that time was of the essence, as the equipment would be delivered in the next couple of weeks

Councillor Harper queried if the Architect had omitted the storage shed from the original plans, Councillor Swift replied that it had been discussed at the time but was not included on the final plan.

It was agreed to defer this to the Town Burial Ground Committee, noting that a special meeting could be convened.

56. ST LAWRENCE PRE SCHOOL

The Pre School would, unfortunately, close on 23 October 2015 due to a fall in numbers. Committee members had contacted the Council to ask what they should do with equipment purchased from a Town Council grant earlier in the year. They suggested giving it to a local group, if members were in agreement. It was agreed that the equipment should be donated to Biddulph Moor Pre School, the only non-commercial pre-school in the town. A letter would be sent to the St Lawrence Pre School Chair informing them of the decision.

57. TOWN CENTRE STEERING GROUP

A site meeting of this group would take place at 2.00 pm on Wednesday 21 October 2015, to meet in front of the town hall. (Members: Cllrs Court, Davies, Hart, Jackson, Lawson, Rogers and Rushton. County Councillor Deaville also invited.) Following the comments in the public participation, it was moved that Councillor McGuinness should join the steering group.

58. MEETINGS ATTENDED DURING THE MONTH

- a Councillor Lawson gave an update on the Biddulph Arms crossing. A report was circulated and Councillor Lawson red out the salient points. County Councillors each had £10,000 to use for the benefit of their community, Councillor Lawson offered help to improve the crossing. There were already two speed signs in the vicinity, one permanent. Councillor Lawson had already asked if illuminated poles could be installed; Mr Hart, the Chair of Biddulph Valley North Community Association, would like these, but would prefer a pelican crossing. This was the only non-pelican crossing on the A527 between the Cheshire and Stoke-on-Trent borders. Mr Hart had said that he felt that the only reason there had been no serious incidents was that the local residents were aware of the danger and traversed the crossing with care, especially in the evenings. Councillor Hart asked for this to be added to the next agenda of the GP committee to give members time to look at the report.
- b Councillor Sheldon had accompanied Councillor Baddeley to the Biddulph Music Festival – a wonderful event. She congratulated the organisers for the standard and professionalism of the adjudicators.
- c Councillor Hawley reported that there had been two Neighbourhood Planning workshops; at Brown Lees and Knypersley, both well attended with good

feedback. One would be held at Biddulph Moor the following day and a combined workshop for the Biddulph North and Gillow Heath areas on 27 October 2015. Biddulph High School would be hosting a workshop and a 'catch all' event would be held at Biddulph Town Hall, to be confirmed.

- d Councillor McGuinness noted that five new lady members had attended the Probus meeting.
- e Councillor Lawson had attended a meeting of the North Staffs Area Health Authority; Mr Marcus Warnes, clinical commissioning group chief operations manager had resigned. Councillor Lawson had also attended a Fire and Rescue Services meeting where a full report and film of the Bosley Mill fire and the Alton Towers rollercoaster accident were given. Councillor Hart commented that having two major tragedies very near to this town showed that if the recent proposals had been brought in; the emergency services would not have been able to cope.
- f Councillor Redfern had attended a recent meeting of the Arts Forum where discussions included problems with booking the Town Hall and the rising cost of booking the Town Hall.
- g Councillors Redfern and Sheldon had attended a meeting of the SMDC Overview and Scrutiny panel. Re recycling at Mill Hayes would cease in near future as it was not being used enough, concerns were expressed that fly tipping would increase due to the closure. Extra patrols would be used to clear fly tipping. Councillor Sheldon noted that fly tipping was a constant nuisance adding that there was no facility in Biddulph for trade waste, unlike both Leek and Cheadle. Councillor Rogers asked for this to be added to the following month's agenda.

59. LENGSTHMAN WORK

- a Biddulph Valley Park paths: The Chief Officer explained about the heavily used footpaths and that improvements would cost iro £2000. Councillor Jackson had agreed to give £1000 towards the project from his County Councillor allowance. There was £500 remaining in the Footpaths budget and the proposal was to seek approval to use £500 from the Lengthsman budget towards these footpath improvements. This was proposed by Councillor Whilding and seconded by Councillor Rushton. All were in favour and the motion was Carried. It was noted that The County Council had approved the use of Lengthsman budget for this work.
- b To report highway issues suitable for the Lengthsman scheme: Councillor Lawson noted that the County Highways community safety team would be in Biddulph soon any small jobs report to himself and Councillor Jackson in the following weeks

60. CHIEF OFFICER'S REPORT

1 Christmas Free Car Parking

I have contacted the District Council and confirmed that there will be no car parking charges at Wharf Road car park on the following Saturdays: 28th November (Christmas lights switch on), 5th, 12th and 19th December.

2 Staffordshire Victim Gateway

A new approach to supporting victims introduced by Staffordshire's Police & Crime Commissioner will put the needs of victims at the heart of the criminal justice system across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. A Citizens Advice Bureau consortium led by Staffordshire North and Stoke-on-Trent CAB won a three-and-half-year contract to develop the Staffordshire Victim Gateway which will offer

free advice and support to victims, witnesses and their families. From 1st September this has replaced the former regional general support service delivered from Birmingham by Victim Support.

Staffordshire is the first area across the country to pioneer the new CAB-led approach which is unique because it is based locally, offering a tailored service for victims. For the first time support will be offered to ALL victims - not just those who report crime to police – which means the Gateway will double the number of people offered help from 23,000 to approximately 50,000 a year. Victims will get timely advice and emotional and practical support in the way that suits them best, whether over the `phone or face to face.

Information about the Staffordshire Victim Gateway is available at www.staffsvictimsgateway.org.uk or by ringing 0330 0881 339.

It was noted that victims of stalkers could also seek help.

3 Reminder - Scams Awareness

Cheadle CAB, in partnership with Your Housing, is organising three scams awareness sessions. The Biddulph session will be held on Wednesday 11 November from 10 am – 12 pm in the Training Suite at the Children’s Centre. Any councillor wishing to attend should email admin@cheadlecab.cabnet.org.uk or phone 01538 751816.

The meeting closed at 8.15 pm

Signed Date