

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE MEETING,
BIDDULPH TOWN COUNCIL
TUESDAY 18 JANUARY 2022, 6.30PM
HELD AT BIDDULPH TOWN HALL, HIGH STREET, BIDDULPH ST8 6AR**

PRESENT:

- **The Mayor:**
Councillor S Rushton
- **Deputy Mayor:**
Councillor J Garvey
- Councillor J Davies
- Councillor K Harper
- Councillor K H Jackson
- Councillor J T Jones
- Councillor A J McLoughlin
- Councillor C R Perkin
- Councillor W Rogers
- Councillor H M Sheldon MBE
- Councillor C M Smith
- Councillor N R Yates

IN ATTENDANCE:

- Mrs Sarah M Haydon – Chief Officer (Minute Taker)
- Ms Jodie Hancock – Events and Partnerships Officer
- Ms Esther Gladstone – Finance and Administration Officer

40. APOLOGIES

Apologies were recorded for:

- Councillor E E Baddeley
- Councillor J P Redfern (Absent)
- Councillor J Salt
- Councillor G Swift

41. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

- a) **Disclosable pecuniary interests and dispensations:** Councillor Sheldon declared an interested in any matter related to Biddulph in Bloom.
- b) **Other interests:** None declared

42. MINUTES

Minutes of the Town and Community Committee meeting held on 16 November 2021 were **signed**.

Moved by Councillor Garvey, seconded by Councillor Perkin. All in favour.

The Notes from the meeting of the Christmas Events Working Group held on 15 November 2021 were **received**.

It was noted that there was an informal catch-up of this Working Group on 24 November 2021, with no set agenda. The focus of this meeting was the predicted poor weather and any necessary modifications to the event on 27 November 2021.

Moved by Councillor Garvey, seconded by Councillor Davies, all in favour.

The Notes from the meeting of the Young People's Working Group held on 9 December 2021 were **received**. Moved by Councillor Sheldon, seconded by Councillor Garvey. All in favour.

The Notes from the meeting of the Civic Events Working Group held on 10 January 2021 were **received**.

Moved by Councillor Garvey, seconded by Councillor Davies. All in favour.

43. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE SUPPORT STAFFORDSHIRE BIDDULPH COMMUNITY OFFICER ON CURRENT PROJECTS AND ASPIRATIONS

Item deferred to a future meeting.

44. TO NOTE THAT THE TOWN COUNCIL HAS RECEIVED A GRANT FROM WESTERN POWER DISTRIBUTION FOR THE PROVISION OF FUEL POVERTY SUPPORT

The Chief Officer noted that following an application before Christmas, the Town Council had been granted £2000 to train staff on fuel poverty and run events at the Town Hall to support the community and local businesses.

Councillor Yates wondered if the funding could include providing low energy light bulbs to those in need.

Councillor Davies said while the bulb idea was a good idea in principle, he wasn't sure on the practicalities given the number of light fittings now used.

Councillor Smith queried what support Citizens Advice were providing about fuel poverty and suggested linking with local support groups to coordinate efforts in addressing fuel poverty.

Councillor Yates and Councillor Davies suggested working with Citizens Advice. Support Staffordshire and Foodbanks together.

Councillor Jackson also suggested working with Beat the Cold alongside any energy companies.

Councillor Jackson asked when the event would be best taking place.

Councillor Harper suggested that as fuel poverty is a long term issue, there may be additional input needed from the Town Council. The Chief Officer noted that the training is designed to ensure that the Town Council staff can provide support on a long term basis.

Councillor Sheldon said that energy saving companies have previously held exhibitions in the Town Hall where they gave freebies to those that attended. She wondered if similar promotional items, which serve a fuel saving / efficiency function could be considered.

Councillor Harper suggested that the firms that previously attended may provide stock.

Councillor Rogers said part of the aim should be to educate people on the savings to be made on changing to more efficient light bulb types.

Councillor Yates suggested that the Town Council consider holding an event regarding energy to coincide with the impending changes to the energy price cap.

Councillor Yates and Councillor Sheldon stressed the importance of insulation.

Councillor Smith suggested that information on grants for individuals be included as part of any event and training.

The Chief Officer encouraged all present to contribute any further ideas they may have as they arise.

45. TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE ON WELCOME BACK FUNDING

Street cleaning is due to take place in February and additional planting will take place along the High Street. Landlords of empty shops are being contacted regarding displays in their windows and enquiries regarding undertaking footfall analysis are in progress. It is hoped some funding can be used for the 'Love your High Street' event planned for February.

The Town Council is required to spend and submit evidence of the expenditure for Welcome Back by the end of March.

Involvement with schools is limited at the moment due to high rates of Covid. The Town Council hopes to support the Fairtrade event at the end of February / early March.

Councillor Smith wondered if some of the Welcome Back funding would support the local businesses and relaunch of the Business Chamber.

Councillor Yates expressed frustration about the tight deadline, given the ever changing regulations and ongoing nature of Covid. He suggested that the winter scene display be updated to a spring display over the coming months.

46. TO CONSIDER AND AGREE POTENTIAL ARTISAN MARKET OPTIONS FOR 2022

The Chief Officer said that the new market set up in front of the Town Hall was well received, but the number of traders had reduced, as had footfall. The event time during work hours on a Friday may restrict the number of traders and attendees. It was therefore suggested that the Friday market be moved to a Twilight Market, to accommodate those that work and to promote the night time economy.

Councillor Rogers said he didn't want to see the day market disappear, and felt that the Twilight market was workable; it should be inside during autumn and winter months. He suggested that the market continue 12 months of the year, though the Chief Officer noted that the traders did not want this.

Councillor Sheldon asked if some of the market could take place in the Town Hall as she felt that some of the market was better suited to an indoor environment. The Events and Partnerships Officer said that the Twilight Market would take place both on the Town Hall Frontage and inside the building.

Councillor Jones queried if this could alternate with the Artisan Market; he felt the Twilight Market was more suited to the summer season, with more of a focus around food and drink provision.

Councillor Garvey and Councillor Yates also noted the transformation of High Streets from a retail area to a social space.

Councillor Yates asked of the Town Council public liability insurance could support ad-hoc market traders/car boot type sellers who trade as part of these events. It was noted that the Town Council has extended public liability insurance for first-time and low-risk market traders previously, but this would be at the discretion of the Chief Officer.

Councillor Smith declared an interested as an ad-hoc market trader. She noted that Twilight Markets she visits tend to be very well attended. She felt that the Artisan Market can be more of a seasonal event.

Councillor Harper noted how well farmers markets tended to fare. He wondered if Welcome Back funding may support some of the market initiatives.

Councillor Jackson queried whether Congleton would need to give permission for the change of timing, but it was confirmed that this was not the case.

Councillor Rogers suggested removing 'Artisan' from the market name.

It was agreed that the team should continue to work up the concept of a Twilight Market, supplemented by a Fresh Food Friday offering and ad hoc events. This would be discussed further at a later meeting.

47. TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE ON THE FEBRUARY 'LOVE YOUR LOCAL HIGH STREET' PROJECT

The Chief Officer confirmed that this is to support the independent high street stores. A weekly prize drawer for those shopping on the High Street was suggested, with a view to starting this on the week of Valentines Day. Welcome Back funding would support this project.

Councillor Harper queried whether there was legislation that needed to be considered. The Chief Officer noted that this will be investigated.

Councillor Smith said that a gambling and lotteries license may be beneficial, and was not a major expense.

Councillor Rushton said that this project was a good opportunity to try and relaunch the Business Chamber. Councillor Rushton said that she was happy to approach local businesses regarding the matter.

Councillor Garvey said he felt that contact with Leek regarding the 'shop local' campaign undertaken there may be beneficial.

48. TO RECEIVE A SUMMARY OF PROPOSED EVENTS FOR 2022

A summary of proposed events was shared.

Councillor Garvey noted that there is increased support from the Biddulph Moor Community Association regarding tree planting in Biddulph.

Councillor Jones agreed to find a piper for the 2nd June Platinum Jubilee event.

Councillor Smith suggested a vintage and kilo fair may tie in well with the Platinum Jubilee and car show events. She also suggested adding an Ethical Fair to the plan.

Councillor Harper suggested the Town Council formally write to the Queen as part of the Jubilee celebration.

Councillor Garvey suggested that a beer or music festival run alongside the car show event.

Councillor Smith suggested that the music festival should pay tribute to Craig Pickering who organised the event previously, though this could be organised by local pubs or businesses rather than as a Town Council event. Councillor Rogers said he understood an event was already booked to take place at the Town Hall as a tribute to Craig Pickering.

Councillor Jones asked if there would be a new tender for the bar before May. It was confirmed that this is due to take place.

49. TO CONSIDER THE REINSTATEMENT OF THE ‘HAPPY TO CHAT’ BENCH; ITEM REQUESTED BY A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC

Councillor Yates said he was keen on the idea, but a new bench was needed to avoid using a memorial bench. He suggested that the Town Hall garden area may be a good location.

Councillor Garvey also expressed support for the bench and the suggested location. Councillor Sheldon said that she didn't think that the Town Hall garden was a safe location due to the steps down and the paths being uneven. She said that she didn't think those who contributed to the memorial benches would object to them being used as a 'happy to chat' bench, but rather the people who use the benches regularly may have concerns.

Councillor Rogers said that the Town Hall garden area had previously been used for purposes other than the intended use. The Chief Officer noted that none of the benches at Station Road were dedicated.

Councillor Jones said that a previous councillor, Councillor Roberts had put money aside for the redevelopment of the Garden by the Town Hall as a memorial. It was noted by Councillor Harper and Councillor Jackson that the money had been returned to the Regiment it was intended to support.

Councillor Yates suggested that a happy to chat bench should be visible, so a memorial bench may be better suited to the Town Hall garden which is more reflective, while the Happy to Chat bench should be more accessible.

Councillor Harper suggested there could be stigmatisation associated with the Happy to Chat bench, and signage may increase this issue.

Councillor Sheldon said that she would be able to contact living relatives of many of those that memorial benches are directed to.

It was agreed to develop proposals about ideas and localities and finalise this at a later meeting.

The meeting ended at 7.50pm.

Signed.....Date.....