

MINUTES OF THE CIVIC COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 9 AUGUST 2016

PRESENT

The Mayor – Councillor Salt
The Deputy Mayor – Councillor Wood
Councillor Baddeley
Councillor Court
Councillor Davies
Councillor Hall
Councillor Hart
Councillor Jackson
Councillor Lawson
Councillor McGuinness
Councillor Redfern
Councillor Rogers
Councillor Sheldon
Councillor Swift
Councillor Whilding

16.16 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from
Councillor Jones
Councillor Rushton

17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

18 MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** to sign the Minutes of the meeting of the Civic Committee held on 12 July 2016.

It was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Tourism Committee meeting held on 12 July 2016. Councillor Rogers re-iterated the request for photographs for the calendar.

19 FINGER POSTS

The Chief Officer updated the Committee that this was ongoing; two quotes had been received, but the Chief Officer was to query materials with the suppliers.

Councillor Court that there was now a fingerpost missing in the Wharf Road car park.

20 MEETING WITH TRADERS UPDATE

The Chief Officer tabled an update paper.

Councillor Davies stated that there would be a Christmas Lights Switch-On meeting in September; issues raised in relation to this event could be considered in greater depth at this meeting. The most important section of this paper was the 'next steps':

1. Support the Biddulph Business Chamber by:
 - offering a room and refreshments for meetings
 - providing administrative support, where needed
 - revisit the Partnership Protocol document
2. Organise a Christmas Lights Switch- On meeting in September and consider the issues raised above.
3. Investigate the possibility of creating a Town Centre Coordinator post. Receive a costed options appraisal at the September 2016 Civic Committee meeting.
4. Investigate the cost of supporting businesses to develop a 'Have you tried...'
leaflet.

Councillor Lawson wondered whether the Town Council would be successful if Officers hand delivered 100 leaflets and only four traders turned up.

Councillor Rogers stated that this was frustrating and that if traders want more at Christmas there need to be more volunteers.

Councillor Davies stated that there is a hope that we can all work together.

Councillor Wood stated that there is a separation between the Town Hall and traders and that relationships need to be re-built again. Traders would see that the Town Hall was trying to improve. Hopefully we can grow a better working relationship. Councillor Wood gave thanks to the Chief Officer. We should be helping if we can.

Councillor Jackson queried the mechanics of a 'have you tried...' leaflet. The Town Centre Co-ordinator achieved positive things such as improved parking. Amazon (and the like) is biggest problem on High Street. 'Totally Locally' in Leek is a success; Money spent in the town circulates in the town. The Town Council is a willing partner. We need this to be an active partnership

Councillor Hall moved that the Town Council try these initiatives. The Mayor gave permission for the Council Chamber to be used free of charge. The Committee was supportive of further investigation.

Councillor Sheldon – general public don't realise by taking money out of town, they can't help the community. Local schools, care homes, churches go to local businesses for support. If businesses are not there, can't support these things.

Councillor Baddeley had to go to Congleton for items that could have got in Biddulph.

21 CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

There will be further discussion about making changes to the Switch-On event at the meeting in September.

The Chief Officer had been invited to a meeting about the development of the Town Hall, which may have implications for the Rotary Santa.

22 CROSSING ON HIGH STREET AND COMMERCIAL VEHICLES

The Chief Officer updated the Committee that there was no progress with the crossing on the High Street, but that she and the County Councillors were meeting with David Greatbatch on 10 August 2016 to discuss how to take ongoing Highways issues forward.

Councillor Rogers stated that B & M had been very apologetic about pulling down the bunting. They have now given drivers a different postcode.

The Chief Officer updated the Committee about adding a sign that would restrict commercial vehicles on the High Street. Feedback was that this could not currently be justified, despite the Council being willing to consider funding this.

Councillor Davies suggested that there should be a diary of incidents that would help to build the case.

Councillor Wood was frustrated by the negativity from the County Council.

Councillor Davies agreed.

Councillor Hall stated that there are criteria for installing signage, and felt it was important to understand what the criteria were.

Councillor Lawson could understand the frustration, but stated that there was no money.

Councillor Jackson agreed to raise this with David Greatbatch at their meeting.

Councillor Davies was also concerned about the HGV sign on Fold Lane.

Councillor Sheldon highlighted an issue with two enormous signs on Tunstall Road.

Councillor Hall queried whether the 'Halt' sign by the monument could be moved.

Councillor Salt thought the footpath on Park Lane was a disgrace.

The Chief Officer would raise these with David Greatbatch.

23 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

a Mayor's Chain

Councillor Davies read quotation from Skelhorne Jewellers. Councillor Davies stated this it was this Committee's duty to maintain Civic Regalia. Councillor Davies proposed that the quotation be accepted, Councillor Rogers seconded. This was Agreed.

b Councillor Rogers raised the issue of taxis. This was likely to be an issue in the Chronicle. He felt annoyed as they were moved a short distance from the usual space for the Artisan Market.

Councillor Jackson stated that we should invite taxi firms to join the Biddulph Business Chamber as they are an integral part of the town.

- c Councillor Davies tabled Councillor Sheldon's report about the Town Hall frontage. Councillor Sheldon had not been available at the previous meeting when this was discussed. Councillors should read and consider the points.
- d Councillor Wood reported on an 'Albion First' leaflet that had been put through his letterbox. This was a racist piece of literature; the inflammatory language is dangerous. Councillors should defend democracy and need to be aware of this.

Councillor Davies thanked Councillor Wood. Councillor Redfern was also aware of this document.

Councillor Sheldon suggested that the Town Council issue a statement condemning this literature; this was seconded by Councillor Whilding.

Councillor Davies proposed that this proposal was taken forward to the next meeting of the Town Council. This was Agreed.

The meeting closed at 8.15 pm

Signed Date