

MINUTES OF THE CIVIC COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 12 SEPTEMBER 2017

PRESENT

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

Also in attendance
Councillor Harper
Councillor Nicosia

32.17 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from
Councillor Rogers

Councillor Hawley sent apologies.

33. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- a Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Dispensations: Councillor Sheldon- anything pertaining to Biddulph in Bloom.
- b Other Interests: Minute 42, Councillors Court and Hall were members of Biddulph Rotary and knew the fruit and veg seller.

34. MINUTES

- a The Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 8 August 2017 were signed.
- b The Minutes of the Tourism Sub-Committee held on 8 August 2017 were received.

35. UPDATE ON POP-UP SHOPS MEETING

Councillor Davies proposed that discussion on this item be deferred as a confidential item at the end of the meeting. This was agreed.

36. AGREEMENT OF HERITAGE PROJECTS

The Chief Officer reminded members the £12,700 had been awarded to this Council the previous month for heritage projects, from the Moorlands Partnership Board. £10,000 would be allocated to the Biddulph Grange Country Park work (as discussed in the General Purposes Committee) with £2,700 for identified heritage projects in the town. The Chief Officer needed to write and formally accept the award and explain how it would be used.

Approval was needed for the four projects identified in previous meetings, which would be match-funded from this Committee budget:

- Tower Hill Road Well
- Trent Head
- Station at Gillow Heath
- Additional railings on the A527

Councillor Davies proposed that the first to be worked on should be the railings, which would finish the project.

Councillor Salt asked if the war memorial would be considered a heritage project. Councillor Sheldon thought there was a specific fund for that type of work.

The Chief Officer added that the Conservation Officer at the District Council had mentioned that further applications could be made, if additional projects were identified.

Councillor Hart noted that further projects could be identified in the future and there may be funds left towards the end of the financial year.

Councillor Davies thought it was important to keep on top of the projects and make the best advantage while funds were available.

Councillor Harper noted that the War Memorials Trust may be able to help with the railings. Councillor Davies proposed that a visit to the site with Mrs Rice should be the first action.

Councillor Sheldon had heard of an historic kissing gate at the old Selectus site. Councillor Davies noted that it was now a gate 'to nowhere', the path had been incorporated into the roadway; however, the gate could be moved if a suitable site could be found. Councillor Hart noted that previously a gate between the burial grounds had been discussed.

Councillor Salt asked about the tunnel near to the Grange. Councillor Davies replied that it was out of the scope at the moment, but would be kept on the radar.

Councillor Hall moved the four proposals; this was seconded by Councillor Sheldon and agreed.

37. YOUTH DISCO AND BUDGET

The Chief Officer reported that during discussion with the Youth Advisors, the idea of an inter-school disco had been raised; it was hoped that this might improve relations between the schools, help to get youngsters off the streets and introduce them to the Biddulph Youth and Community Zone (BYCZ). Joseph – a youth worker at BYCZ would arrange the event and asked for a contribution of £100 towards the venture. The Chief Officer noted that the Youth Advisor group did not have a budget.

Councillor Davies supported the idea, adding that as a Council we had supported the public space protection order, which would impact on young people in the town.

Councillor Wood fully supported the idea of encouraging the youth in a positive manner, this was seconded by Councillor Hall.

Councillor Jones suggested that the Town Hall would be a better venue. He had previously discussed a similar idea with PCSO Powell, which encouraged youngsters to use the centre of the town in a positive way

Councillor Salt was a board member of BYCZ and noted that Joseph had been taken on as an apprentice the previous year and had flourished at the centre. She added that BYCZ was risk assessed and regularly held discos, there would be a lot more rigmarole to hold an event at the Town Hall, and it would be more difficult and more costly.

Councillor Hall noted that the idea was to introduce young people to what was on offer at the BYCZ, and there would be additional costs to use the Town Hall.

Councillor Jones would prefer it to be held at the Town Hall, in the town, as the young people were being excluded from the town.

Councillor Davies noted that the application had come from the BYCZ, but he supported what was being said.

Councillor Salt suggested holding another event at the Town Hall; she would be happy to do this with the support of the Events and Partnerships Officer, we could do both.

Councillor Jones was in favour of doing both.

Councillor Nicosia would help with an event at the Town Hall; it would be something different, and felt that parents may prefer this venue.

Councillor Jones added that this Council had been seen to be excluding youngsters, we should show that we are not excluding them and are happy to host them here.

Councillor Davies proposed that £100 is given to BYCZ towards the disco. This was agreed. Councillor Jones would work on holding an event at the Town Hall; Councillors Wood, Rushton, Nicosia and Salt would assist. Councillor Jones would contact PCSO Powell.

38. USE OF THE TOWN HALL FRONTAGE- INCREASED FOOTFALL ON HIGH STREET

The Chief Officer reported that four businesses would be using the Loading Bay and Town Hall frontage every Friday from 22 September 2017; Glebe Farm – fruit and vegetable stall, Select Fish, Cheshire Pie and the Cheese Counter. The project had been on hold during the building works, but permission had now been granted to use the Loading Bay and frontage. Strategically, this was important as the Town Council wished to increase footfall on the High Street.

The Chief Officer would like to purchase three A-boards, which would be used every Friday to encourage shoppers to visit different areas of the town. This was agreed.

Councillor Wood was fully supportive and thought it was great to utilise the front of the Town Hall; at Churches Together coffee mornings during the Festival it brought people into the town.

Councillor Hart thought this was phenomenal news; there had been stalls pictured outside the town hall on the front of the 2006 Area Action Plan. He wished the venture success, and growth- if space allowed.

Councillor Jackson asked if this would impinge on the taxis, and asked whether Congleton would have a view on this, as there is a market Charter in place. The Chief Officer noted that this would only use the Loading Bay, not the taxi rank, and she had checked with Cheshire East, who had been happy to support any venture as long as it did not happen on a Saturday; they hoped it would be 'fruitful'!

Councillor Salt was concerned about A-boards, she had knowledge of one blowing onto a baby's pushchair. She suggested that a fifth stall could be provided for businesses in town to display their wares. Councillor Davies noted that the frames would be secured with sandbags. He thought a free stall might be a suggestion for the Artisan Market.

Councillor Sheldon wished the venture every success and wondered if the Town Hall could be used where items were not weatherproof.

Councillor Davies thought this a good positive move for the town.

39. CALENDAR COSTS AND APPROVAL

The Chief Officer noted that potential photographs were displayed in the room; Councillors should add 'ticks' to those that they liked.

Councillor Davies noted that the Tourism Sub-Committee would not meet again until November, it fell on this Committee to move the calendar forward. There had been a phenomenal response to the request for photographs. Officers had whittled down the pictures to the 30 on display.

The 2017 calendar had made a small loss and the Tourism Sub-Committee wondered if only 300 should be ordered this year. There would be cost implications for ordering a smaller number, but if over-ordered there could be waste.

Prices were circulated for 300 and 500 calendars.

Councillor Salt thought it would create a bit more of a buzz if the calendars sold out, rather than being reduced, and it would encourage people to buy earlier the following year.

Councillor Lawson noted that we were living in a time of mobile phones; we should look at the display and modernise.

Councillor Sheldon thought a smaller run and sell out would be best; it was so wasteful if they have to be disposed of.

Councillor McGuinness asked if the quality was the same for each quote.

Councillor Swift noted that Chapter One used to sell 200, he had sold 50 one year. He felt that we relied too much on smaller shops and encouraged fellow Councillors to sell them too.

Councillor Jones asked when the deadline for photographs was and where had it been advertised. The deadline was 1 September 2017 and leaflets and social media had been used to advertise the quest.

Councillor Davies thought that quote 2 was the best, we knew the company and had worked with it before when they had proved to be very reliable.

A vote was taken and 12 were in favour of Option 2 for 300 calendars, with 1 in favour of Option 2, 500 calendars. It was agreed for 300 from Quote 2.

40. NORTH HIGH STREET LOADING BAY

Councillor Nicosia reported that some traders at the north of the High Street were finding it extremely difficult to take deliveries or to load stock and would like a Loading Bay. They had reported that people used the area as a long-term car park. Councillor Nicosia felt that parking enforcement was ineffectual and noted that disabled parking would not be permitted in a Loading Bay.

Councillor Hart thought that there were plans originally for a Loading Bay outside the mobility shop, then by the florist. However, a previous trader had set up a petition to stop this and it hadn't materialised. The trader had now left the town; Councillor Hart thought this was the time to implement what had been designed and a Loading Bay should be installed. He noted that the buildings in that area were quite old without easy rear access; Councillor Hart fully supported Councillor Nicosia, adding that it was long overdue.

Councillor Jackson was worried and concerned that motorists would use the Loading Bay as a car park. He noted that traders can park on double yellow lines to load and unload; the problem was that the town was not sufficiently enforced. Councillor Jackson felt that more thought should be given to the matter; he was not convinced that a Loading Bay was the right solution.

Councillor Davies had spoken to Mr Macdonald, Chairman of the Biddulph Business Chamber; he had canvassed traders in that area and they had supported a Loading Bay.

Councillor Salt asked if the traders were aware that they could park for 10 minutes on a double yellow line to load and unload. Councillor Nicosia responded that this was not sufficient time for some of them. Councillor Salt added that the Loading Bay could be used by other traders. Councillor Nicosia responded that there would be quite a few who could use it. Councillor Salt replied that they would then be in the same position as they were now.

Councillor Sheldon felt that a lot of the problems would be solved with an efficient parking enforcement system; we should try to get Officers here on a regular basis.

Councillor Jones agreed, adding that people already park in the Loading Bay at the Town Hall, it was a pointless exercise.

Councillor Harper noted that people can only park on double yellow lines if not causing an obstruction; we should trial a Loading Bay.

Councillor Davies responded that we either do or we don't, it would need a traffic order. He asked if members supported Councillor Nicosia and wanted to ask the County Council to look at the matter.

Councillor Swift felt we were trying to please everyone; the only solution was free parking on Wharf Road, but we could not do the impossible, motorists could park on Wharf Road for 12 shillings for 2 hours.

Councillor Lawson suggested that we employ our own traffic warden.

Councillor Hart gave a point of clarification that enforcement had been run by the District Council, but the County Council awarded the contract to Stoke on Trent.

Councillor Jones supported Councillor Nicosia and was sympathetic with the traders. A Loading Bay would be useless unless it was enforced; we should ask the County to look at what could be done.

Councillor Salt gave a point of clarification, according to the internet search engine Google, traders could load and unload on double yellow lines for 40 minutes and in a Loading Bay for 20 minutes. Councillor Jackson noted that they could be worse off than they were before. Councillor Jones noted that they had 40 minutes now.

Councillor Hall was not quite au fait with the rules. He was not happy with County Council enforcement and felt that this should be put to the County Council for its observations; as an employer it could influence enforcement.

Councillor Nicosia proposed, seconded by Councillor Swift that the County Council is asked to investigate the possibility of specific loading and un-loading bays in the north High Street. All were in favour.

Councillor Davies proposed that a letter is sent to Clear Streets expressing our disappointment.

Councillor Lawson noted that if he received a written question he would ask it at County Council 'question time'.

Councillor Hart proposed that a copy of the letter is sent to Councillor Mark Deaville. These actions were agreed.

41. STATION ROAD UPDATE

Councillor Davies reported that Sainsbury's now seemed to be happy with the closure of the spur road and the creation of a Community Garden,. The District Council had advised that planning permission would be needed. Beverley Poole would draw up the plans for the planning application at a cost of £675. There would be a fee of £250 to create a rudimentary costing scheme. Additional payment would be needed to submit the planning application.

Councillor Davies noted that one area causing concern was the fountain water in the play park. He had received advice from David Owen, Health and Safety Advisor at the District Council. Mr Owen had confirmed that there was a possibility of legionella in the height of summer in a shallow fountain. A risk assessment would be needed with ongoing maintenance implications.

Councillor Wood responded that we could always make excuses for not doing projects. He was fully supportive of the fountains and felt they would be a good attraction for the town.

Councillor Salt noted that she was not precious about fountains but did want the S.106 money to be spent in that area. She had recently visited Moorlands House and seen a fountain there, and felt that if it can be done in one area of the Moorlands it could be done here, we should mitigate the risk. Councillor Salt added that there would be more risk to health from a sand pit.

Councillor Sheldon suggested asking for the 'pros and cons' of fountains from other councils, collecting real evidence.

Councillor Hall noted that fountains could be out of our reach as we had not received costings, but agreed that we should seek as much information as possible.

Councillor Davies wanted to go ahead with applying for planning permission as time was pressing and agreed that we should talk to other Councils.

Councillor Salt would be happy with 2 or 3 water spouts.

Councillor Davies proposed that the architect is instructed to draw up the plans and submit them on our behalf, and draw up the costings. This was seconded by Councillor Hall and agreed.

Councillor Harper noted that he envisaged the Mining Memorial as a block of black granite on a pedestal, with narrative on one side and the names on the other. He thought this would be a fitting monument for all the miners killed in the valley. He envisaged that the memorial would cost no more than £10,000.

42. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

- a Councillor Davies noted that at this point he would usually congratulate Councillor Sheldon and Biddulph in Bloom. This year the 'In Bloom' competition had not been entered, but the town still looked spectacular. He thanked Biddulph in Bloom for its efforts.

- b Councillor Davies reported from a meeting held the previous evening, that the Christmas Lights would be much the same as the previous year. Arrangements were continuing.
- c The Chief Officer would like to become a licensee for Town Council events outside the Town Hall. It made sense for the licensee to be locally based and involved with the Town Council. It was proposed by Councillor Wood and seconded by Councillor Rushton that the Chief Officer undertakes suitable training and gains the licence. All were in agreement.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

Exclusion of the Press and Public

The Chair to move:-

“That, pursuant to Section 100A (2) and (4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings whereby it is likely that confidential information as defined in Section 100A (3) of the Act would be disclosed to the public in breach of the obligation of confidence or exempt information as defined in Section 10 I (1) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act would be disclosed to the public by virtue of the Paragraphs indicated.”

43. UPDATE ON POP-UP SHOPS MEETING

The meeting closed at 8.44 pm

Signed Date