

MINUTES OF THE CIVIC COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 5 DECEMBER 2017

Councillor Davies thanked fellow members for the cards and good wishes received during his recent illness.

Councillor Davies noted that the Chronicle reporter would be recording the meeting.

PRESENT

The Mayor – Councillor Wood
The Deputy Mayor Councillor McGuinness
Councillor Baddeley
Councillor Court
Councillor Davies
Councillor Hall
Councillor Jackson
Councillor Jones
Councillor Lawson
Councillor Rogers
Councillor Sheldon
Councillor Whilding

Also in attendance
Councillor Harper
Councillor Hawley
Councillor Nicosia

65.17 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from:
Councillor Hart
Councillor Rushton
Councillor Salt
Councillor Swift

Councillor Swift's wife Irene had recently undergone an operation to repair a broken hip; it was moved that a card would be sent from this Council.

66. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- i. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests & Dispensations. Councillor Sheldon any matters pertaining to Biddulph in Bloom
- ii. Other Interests. Minute 72, Councillors Court and Hall were fellow Rotarians with the Town Crier

67. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 14 November 2017 were signed.

Councillor Davies moved that Standing Orders be suspended; this was agreed. Mrs Haywood was invited to address the meeting

68. a) MRS ZELDA HAYWOOD (TRADER ON NORTH HIGH STREET) TO SPEAK ABOUT THE ISSUES FACED BY TRADERS

Mrs Haywood had been trading in the North High Street for four years and experienced difficulty when un/loading her stock consisting of large heavy boxes. It was necessary for her to park as close as possible to her premises as there was no rear access. Loading was time critical especially on Saturdays. Vehicles were allowed to wait on double yellow lines when un/loading for up to ten minutes. However, Mrs Haywood reported that the space was always in use by blue badge holders who could legitimately park for up to three hours. The community of traders in the North High Street would like a loading area installed to facilitate un/loading for their premises. Notes in support were read from Clare of Clare's Resales and Cath of Cakes by Millrise.

Councillor Jones supported the proposal, he hadn't realised that blue badge holders were taking the spaces.

Councillor Rogers noted that a traffic consultant would soon be instructed by this Council to look at several issues around the town.

Councillor Wood supported the proposal but noted that it would need to be properly policed.

Councillor Davies noted that there were frustrations with parking enforcement.

Councillor Lawson asked if repainting the lines would help. He would speak to Angela Nutter Highway Officer at the County Council about redesignating the area.

Councillor Jackson noted that a solution to prevent double parking in the bus stop area in South High Street had been the introduction of a loading bay; he noted that blue badge holders currently parked in the loading bay and taxi rank at the front of the Town Hall.

Councillor Lawson suggested that leaflets could be available for shopkeepers to put on the windscreens of offending vehicles advising that they were illegally parked.

Councillor Jones felt that leaflets were a good idea but the loading bay needed to be installed first. He proposed that this Council writes in support of this proposal and that the item should be added to the brief for the highways consultant.

Councillor Davies noted that Councillor Nicosia had been campaigning for the loading bay for a number of months; the next step was the delivery of a questionnaire confirming that all traders were in support of the idea. Highways had requested that the Town Council undertakes more formal feedback to enable a strong case to be made.

Councillor Nicosia clarified that a blue badge holder could park anywhere providing there were not loading restrictions and not causing an obstruction; it was a matter of knowledge, un/loading was possible on double yellow lines providing there was continuous activity.

Councillor Harper noted that recipients of a blue badge receive a booklet with the rules, adding that ignorance was no excuse.

Councillor Davies felt there was great support for a loading bay and it was good to have clarity from one of the traders.

Councillor Sheldon congratulated Mrs Haywood, adding that it was lovely to see an increase in retail in that area and this council should do all it can to support businesses.

Councillor Baddeley noted that there were penalties in place for blue badge holders who parked illegally.

Councillor Jones cautioned that it could be some time before regulations were put in place.

Councillor Lawson pledged part of his allowance to the scheme.

Standing orders were resumed.

b) CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TRADERS ON THE ISSUE OF A LOADING/ UNLOADING BAY

A sample of the survey was circulated.

Councillor Davies recapped that the County Council required formal consultation with all traders in the area to confirm that they were in support of the proposal.

It was agreed that, whilst consideration of traffic flow could be a wider issue for the consultant, inclusion in this questionnaire would detract from the issue.

It was proposed by Councillor Nicosia and seconded by Councillor Jones, a vote was taken and it was agreed that this questionnaire would form the basis of the consultation without the question about traffic flow.

Councillor Rogers wondered if the traders in Station Road should be included.

Councillor Sheldon responded that there were six; Brammers was the only retailer and did not have the same problems.

69. STATION ROAD UPDATE

Councillor Davies had visited the architect Ms Poole; time had been allocated this week to complete the planning application, this should be submitted the following week. Councillor Davies reported that the Chief Officer had contacted Sainsbury's, who were happy to engage in discussions about leasing the land to the Town Council.

70. UPDATE ON STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL DECISION ON MOSAIC AND TV INSTALLATION IN THE RECEPTION AREA

The Chief Officer noted that this Council had agreed to pursue the installation of the mosaic inside the foyer area. Mr Hardaker, the artist, was happy to perform the installation and had identified a suitable site.

A licence agreement was being prepared by the District Council in relation to this and the installation of the TV screen as these were permanent fixtures.

71. APPROVAL OF USING CONSERVATION ARCHITECT AT WOOD GOLDSTRAW YORATH TO ASSIST WITH PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR HERITAGE PROJECTS

The Chief Officer had been advised by the Conservation Officer at the District Council that a planning application must be submitted in order to proceed with the restoration of listed features.

The Chief Officer had met with the owner of the Overton Road troughs who had been delighted that repairs were being carried out. A specialist architect would be required to work up the planning application and submit the relevant drawings. This was specialist work.

Councillor Wood stated it is no wonder that costs spiral out of control with restoration projects.

Councillor Jones agreed and felt this was red tape and a money generator for the District Council; it was ridiculous.

Councillor Lawson agreed.

Councillor Davies noted that this would be the same architect who had overseen the Springfield Road project and they had completed very satisfactory work on this project.

Councillor Sheldon was the Chair of the Moorlands Partnership Board and had not seen one of these requests before. This was the first time it had been applied. She wondered if it could be needed as a replacement basin was being installed, but she had every faith in the craftsman and was as surprised as everyone else.

Councillor Harper asked if this should go out to tender. Councillor Davies responded that this was specialist activity.

Councillor Davies asked the Chief Officer to question why this has not been requested by the Moorlands Partnership Board previously.

72. TOWN CRIER REGALIA

The Chief Officer reported that replacement regalia would cost in the region of £1200, regalia had been provided on two other occasions.

Councillor Jones noted that the Town Crier's regalia was as much a part of the civic regalia as the Mayor's chain, and moved that the Town Council funds the purchase of a new outfit.

Councillor Wood fully supported this, adding that the Town Crier was a representative of the town and competed in competitions in his own time. The Town Crier was a professional and did a professional job, both nationally and internationally.

Councillor Jackson quipped that he was also the Town Crier for Fusignano, perhaps a contribution could be requested.

Councillor Rogers noted that the Town Crier had never flown in the regalia as had previously been inferred.

Councillor McGuinness agreed that it was as much a part of the town as we were. The Town Crier accompanied the Mayor at events and it was an important position; he supported the proposal to fund the purchase of the regalia.

Councillor Davies felt that the Town Crier stood out and carried the regalia well. The purchase would come from the Civic budget.

A vote was taken and all agreed; Councillors Court and Hall abstained from the vote.

73. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Councillor Davies noted that the Christmas Lights switch-on had been a gruesome day; he had been unable to attend and extended admiration for those who had worked all day in atrocious conditions, snow in the morning, rain all afternoon and evening.

Councillor Davies made special mention of the Chief Officer and Events and Partnerships Officer. Councillor Davies thanked Councillor Rushton for preparing the refreshments for the volunteers; Councillor Rogers who had worked all day in the shop then assisted in the evening and his lunch break; and, the Town Crier who had been Master of Ceremonies on the steps. Councillor Davies thought it had been the coldest and wettest switch on that he could remember.

Councillor Jones reported that the Biddulph Moor event had been equally miserable. He requested that this event be brought under the umbrella of the Town Council and is funded directly by the Town Council rather than by a grant to the Biddulph Moor Community Association. The event would cost in the region of £200. Councillor Jones noted that the tree lights were of industrial specification this year. The telephone cable that had been damaged had been repaired the following day. Despite all the setbacks the event had been good; he thanked Paul Warwick for his assistance and noted that Mr Warwick always provided the tree outside the Town Hall.

The meeting closed at 7.50 pm

Signed Date