

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 19 JULY 2016

PRESENT

The Mayor - Councillor Salt
The Deputy Mayor - Councillor Wood
Councillor Baddeley
Councillor Court
Councillor Davies
Councillor Hall
Councillor Hart
Councillor Jackson
Councillor Jones
Councillor Lawson
Councillor Lovatt
Councillor McGuinness
Councillor Nicosia
Councillor Rogers
Councillor Rushton
Councillor Sheldon
Councillor Swift
Councillor Walley
Councillor Whilding

Also in attendance:
Councillor Redfern

19.15.APOLOGIES

No Apologies were received.

20. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- a Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Dispensations: Councillor Hart declared an interest in any matters concerning the Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plan to do with site specifics. Councillor Sheldon in any matters concerning Biddulph in Bloom. Minute 22 Councillor Jones declared a pecuniary interest.
- b Other Disclosable Interests. None were declared.

21. MINUTES

It was **Resolved** to sign the Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 21 June 2016.

Councillor Jones left the meeting before discussion took place on the following item, returning afterwards.

22 EMERGENCY ITEM AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIR

The Chair invited Councillor McGuinness to address the meeting. Councillor McGuinness wanted to bring to the attention of fellow Councillors an article in the previous week's Leek Post and Times – Page 4 – which reported the plan to remove first responders in Leek, and possibly in Biddulph in the future. These would be replaced by an ambulance. Councillor McGuinness noted that the two towns had the same population; First Responders had local knowledge and were usually first on the scene of an incident. He added that the First Responder was a four-wheel drive

vehicle, which the ambulance was not. Councillor Hall proposed that a letter is sent inviting a representative of the West Midlands Ambulance Service to attend a meeting of the General Purposes Committee to explain the situation; this was seconded by Councillor Walley. Councillor Lawson noted that there were three governors in the West Midlands Ambulance Service and one lived in Biddulph. Councillor Hart agreed but felt that it was best to invite an Officer. Councillor Lovatt asked that the letter of invitation be sent forthwith. Councillor Wood had first-hand knowledge. At a recent incident, the first responder had attended in minutes, but the ambulance took much longer to arrive. Councillor Wood added that everyone here had a vested interest, due to the location of Biddulph and its distance from the hospital, to get the Ambulance Service to confirm that it was not eroding the service. Councillor Lawson had been told previously that this was a proposal and added that there were quite a number of elderly people in the town who needed the service. This was a big decision not just numbers. Councillor Rogers added that a paramedic is there at the drop of a hat and that he had personally witnessed paramedics saving lives. Councillor Davies felt that it was essential that Biddulph has four-wheel drive vehicles. Councillor Hart thought that local knowledge was invaluable. Councillor Jackson added that District and County Councils have Health Scrutiny Panels and this situation must have been on their agenda for months. Councillor Jackson said that we should work with facts; invite a representative to the next meeting or leave an open date and fit around them.

23. BUSES IN THE TOWN CENTRE- CLLR MCGUINNESS

Councillor McGuinness had had some discussions with Chris Almond at D and G Buses. From 5 September 2016, the Service 9 would no longer service Biddulph High Street. Mr Almond would fight 'tooth and nail' to retain the temporary stop in the High Street, as a pick up for travellers to Gillow Heath and Congleton, and he felt it was paramount that South View be made one-way. In addition, he would like to see the bollards at the corner of South View moved by two feet, to allow the buses to get round the corner much more easily. Mr Almond had not met with the Town Council and was willing to meet in August, possibly with Dan Flanagan from First Buses.

Councillor Jones responded that South View should be one-way and that Mr Almond was arrogant to suggest that he knew what was best for Biddulph, above the elected representatives of the town. Councillor Rogers noted that when a full road closure is in operation for the market, the bus stop is moved outside Rijo's. He added that most towns had their bus stops and depots out of the town centre. The stop near to B and M was a temporary bus stop and there was one in Well Street and one in Wharf Road both only a few yards away. He felt that we should all pull together on this one.

Councillor Jackson noted that when the Regeneration Executive had been under way, bus companies were unhelpful and put a spanner in the works, he thought it was an excellent idea for Councillor McGuinness to meet with representatives of Potteries First and D and G; their views were important and they bring people in to the town. Councillor Jackson cautioned that every change had an impact on another area, but couldn't see why South View could not be one-way. He added that the bollards were there for a reason and thanked Councillor McGuinness for his input.

Councillor Redfern asked for clarification about the proposed route of the number 9 bus. Councillor McGuinness would find out and pass the information to the Chief Officer. Councillor McGuinness reported that Mr Adrian Lawton's exhibition '100 years of Transport' would be on display at the Library from 29 July – 10 August, Councillor McGuinness would be in attendance to answer questions and seek views on the future of public transport in the town.

Councillor Baddeley asked why a recess could not be made at the temporary bus stop; Councillor Hart replied that the land belonged to a property company based in the Channel Islands.

24. TOWN DEAL UPDATE

Councillor Hart noted that meetings had been sparse and voiced concerns that the next one had been postponed three times. This caused difficulties for members who were in employment who had to use holiday leave to attend. Councillor Jackson concurred and felt that progress in the Town Deal was glacial and should be looked at in conjunction with the Local Plan. Councillor Jackson added that there was now hardly any industrial land available in the town; Biddulph needed land and infrastructure in place first. Councillor Salt expressed frustration about being kept out of the loop. Councillor Hall said District and County Councils were all in the same boat. Councillor Salt asked if Town Councillors were invited to the Town Deal meeting, Councillor Hart responded that that Councillor Hawley attended.

Councillor Jones was annoyed at the lack of respect for Town Councils when meetings were moved with no reasons given; he added that people have commitments and that this Council should make its displeasure known. Councillor Hart concurred and added that it showed a lack of respect. Councillor Hart added that the Town Deal had been a Town/District Council initiative which the County Council had wanted to join.

25. UPDATE ON TOWN CENTRE HIGHWAYS ISSUES

The Chief Officer provided an update on a range of issues that are ongoing with regard to Highways. Councillor Jones felt that this Council should take an holistic approach. Councillor Salt noted that this Council had done a lot of talking and did not seem to be getting anywhere. Councillor Hart noted that getting the secretariat at the County Council to move was difficult and slow progress was made; the number of Officers available had reduced and the situation desperately needed sorting out. Councillor Jones suggested that a plan is formed ready for when the money is available. Councillor Lawson stated that Councillor Deaville would be having a 'walk about' at the beginning of August. Councillor Whilding thought it was a disgrace that Councillor Deaville had not responded and proposed, seconded by Councillor Jones that the Chief Officer writes to Councillor Deaville again.

Councillor Salt asked that the highway updates are given at every meeting of the General Purposes Committee. Councillor Jackson shared The Mayor's frustration; noting that her enthusiasm will become more realistic as years go by and perceptions change. Councillor Jackson thought that the only vehicle to push things forwards was the Town Deal.

26. CHIEF OFFICER'S REPORT

1 Dates for the Diary

Wednesday 27 July 2016, 2pm- Meeting with traders in the Council Chamber (letter tabled).

Saturday 10 September, 2pm- Tall Oaks Residential Home is holding a Classics Fair and would like to invite all Councillors to attend.

2 2017 Biddulph Calendar

The Tourism Sub-Committee has agreed to put together a 2017 Biddulph calendar. We are looking for contributions of pictures or photos of recent events or projects in the town.

They should be emailed to biddulph@staffordshire.gov.uk

The closing date for submissions is Friday 19 August 2016.

We are not able to pay for items that we print, but we will add names to the calendar and give contributors a free one.

3 Diversion of Vehicular Traffic

Akesmore Lane- 16-18 August 2016, water connection work from no.1 for 50 metres.

The Uplands- 29 August- 11 September, connection works between properties no. 24 to 21.

4 Press releases from the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)

- 392 Staffordshire Moorlands' businesses have signed up for the Business Crime Alerts, providing relevant information on business crime.
- The PCC is funding a new project that allows vulnerable victims of crime to give evidence to court rooms through live video links.
- The Space programme runs between 25 July and 2 September 2016, offering free activities for young people. Leaflets are available. Updates are also available on www.staffordshirespace.uk
- Grants are available of between £100 and £3000. People Power Funding is open between 1 August and 14 September.
- People are encouraged to show their support for Police volunteers by nominating the best for a national award. The public now have the opportunity to put names forward for the Lord Ferrers Awards.

5 News from CAB

The CAB has confirmed that they will use grant funding from Biddulph Town Council to pay for an additional service in the town. There will be a full open door service from 1.30-3.30 pm on Tuesday afternoons, and they will be able to offer one additional specialist appointment each week.

6 Springfield Road allotment site (SMD/2015/0554)

The Planning application for the Springfield Road allotment site was approved on 14 July 2016.

There will be a meeting of the Allotments Sub-Committee on 16 August 2016, 6pm. Papers to follow.

It was **RESOLVED** that in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted it is advisable in the public interest that the public and press be temporarily excluded and they were instructed to withdraw.

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm.

Signed Date