

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 21 MARCH 2017

PRESENT

The Mayor – Councillor Salt
The Deputy Mayor – Councillor Wood
Councillor Baddeley
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 Court
Councillor Harper
Councillor Hawley

87.15 APOLOGIES

None.

88 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- a Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Dispensations: Councillor Sheldon in any matters concerning Biddulph in Bloom. Councillor Hart in the site specifics in the Local Plan. Minute 94, Councillor Hall is a member Biddulph Rotary.
- b Other Disclosable Interests. Councillor McGuinness as Churchwarden at St Lawrence's Church.

89 MINUTES

- a It was moved to sign the Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 21 February 2017.
- b It was moved to receive the Minutes of the meeting of the Burial Grounds Sub-Committee meeting held on 14 March 2017.
- c It was moved to receive Notes from the Biddulph Grange Country Park meetings on 1 March 2017. Councillor Jones noted that the group was moving towards putting in the bid. Councillor Jackson suggested that the group should liaise with the team leading on the Brough Park bid; they had just been refused a grant. Councillor Jones noted that Mark Preece was involved with both and will disseminate the lessons learned.

Councillor Hart left the room before this item, Councillor Jones took the Chair.

90. DISCUSSION ABOUT THE WREKIN HOUSING TRUST LETTER

The letter from the Wrekin Housing Trust had been sent to Councillors by email on 7 March 2017 and was enclosed for information. The letter informed Biddulph Town Council that the Wrekin Housing Trust were withdrawing from the Extra Care scheme in Biddulph.

Two reasons for withdrawal were highlighted: the 'protracted planning process' and a change in government policies with regard to revenue funding. Councillor Jackson had spoken to Dai Lerner at SMDC and Gail Edwards at Staffordshire County Council (SCC) who did not believe that Planning was an issue; the Chief Executive at SCC is getting involved. Councillor Jackson believed that changes in revenue funding were the main reason; he had asked for a meeting between SCC, the District Council and Wrekin Housing Trust.

Councillor Jones supported Councillor Jackson and was disappointed for the people of Biddulph.

Councillor Wood stated that he had concerns about the Planning department at the District Council and felt more detail was needed from Wrekin Housing Trust.

Councillor Davies spoke in defence of the Planning department and agreed with Councillor Jackson that government policy was the main issue.

Councillor Jackson felt the Town Deal group would be the best place to coordinate a response to see what Wrekin Housing Trust need to get this project going again. This was seconded by Councillor Salt. All Agreed that this was appropriate.

Councillor Hart returned to the meeting the Chair.

91. LENGTHSMAN SCHEME

The Chief Officer presented a draft specification for a Biddulph Town Council lengthman scheme and asked how Councillors would like to take this forward. This document incorporated feedback that had been received at the previous meeting and by email. It had been agreed previously that this would come back to the General Purposes Committee for further consideration.

Councillor Lovatt felt it was unwieldy for this Committee to look at detailed information and proposed that a working group should be established, and report back to the General Purposes Committee with recommendations. This was seconded by Councillor Salt. All Agreed.

Councillor Jones felt that this would enable decisions to be made quickly.

Councillor Jackson felt some information should be incorporated with regard to the control of weeds and the chemicals used.

It was agreed that the Working Group should consist of Councillors Hall, Hart, Jones, McGuinness and Rushton.

92. FAIRTRADE LOCATION OF BANNERS- ITEM REQUESTED BY COUNCILLOR LOVATT

Councillor Lovatt informed members that the Fairtrade event had been very successful; there were 10 banners. The Town Council were being asked for advice on where to hang the banners.

It was agreed that the Mayor would write a letter thanking Gillian Reynolds for organising the event.

Councillor Jones suggested involving the Chair of the Biddulph Business Chamber in relation to the display of banners.

Suggestions for sites should be sent to Councillors Lovatt and Sheldon.

93. INVOLVEMENT OF THE TOWN COUNCIL IN THE GREAT BRITISH SPRING CLEAN

More information is available at www.greatbritishspringclean.org.uk

The Chief Officer gave an overview of the scheme and stated that this activity could be carried out at any time. Councillors were asked to consider whether the Town Council should register for the scheme.

Councillor Sheldon stated that Biddulph in Bloom had made a start unofficially on Monday; if Councillors let Biddulph in Bloom know of any areas that are untidy, they will clean it up.

It was agreed to become involved.

Councillor Hall left the room before discussion on the following item.

94. SPRINGFIELD ROAD UPDATE

The Chief Officer gave an update and stated that clearance work has commenced on-site. A considerable amount of soil has been moved to level the site. The top soil is now being added.

The contractor has raised a number of concerns about access to the site; residents nearby seem very pleased at present.

Councillor Hart stated that five different people had approached him in the High Street about the openness of the site.

Councillor Sheldon had visited the site that morning and was made aware that people were parking overnight on the part that had been levelled; residents wanted protection for that space.

The Chief Officer stated that there were a number of weeks before the hydro-seeding would commence.

Councillor Jackson stated that there had been quite a lengthy discussion about fly tipping and travellers previously. This had never happened at Biddulph Valley Way. Additional work had not been budgeted for. He was hopeful that fly tipping wouldn't occur. If this is a problem in the future, we will deal with it.

Councillor Lovatt agreed with Councillor Jackson. When the discussions had taken place about the early commencement of the work, Councillors had seen over 50% of the residents; this had not been raised as an issue.

Councillor Jones felt that this should be an issue where the Committee was led by the Ward Councillors.

Councillor Wood proposed that there should be no action; the plan should progress as agreed. This was seconded by Councillor Rushton.

Councillor Hall returned to the meeting.

95. CHIEF OFFICER'S REPORT

1 Police and Crime Commissioner March Updates

- The Police and Crime Commissioner visited Biddulph High School to talk to Year 13 students about the challenges of policing.
- The Biddulph Youth and Community Zone has expanded its activities to 14-19 year olds, funded through The Police and Crime Commissioner's People Power Fund.
- Crime prevention gadgets were available to Biddulph shoppers in Sainsbury's
- Volunteers are required to do spot checks on police custody units; they make unannounced checks on the conditions in police cells and the welfare of the people in custody.

2 Staffordshire Day- 1 May 2017

Our annual celebration of Staffordshire's greatness, Staffordshire Day, is returning on Monday 1st May 2017, with great events, special offers and competitions!

More information is available on www.enjoystaffordshire.com/StaffordshireDay

Councillor Harper welcomed the new Events and Partnership Officer, Jodie Hancock, to the meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.40 pm.

Signed Date