

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

PRESENT

The Mayor Councillor Wood
The Deputy Mayor – Councillor McGuinness
Councillor Baddeley
Councillor Court
Councillor Hall
Councillor Hart
Councillor Jones
Councillor Lawson
Councillor Lovatt
Councillor Nicosia
Councillor Rogers
Councillor Rushton
Councillor Salt
Councillor Walley
Councillor Whilding

Also in attendance:

Councillor Harper
Councillor Flunder

54.17 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence and reasons accepted were received from:

Councillor Davies
Councillor Jackson
Councillor Sheldon
Councillor Swift

55. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- a Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Dispensations: Councillor Jones was employed by NHS.
- b Other Disclosable Interests: None.

56. MINUTES

- a. It was moved to sign the Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 17 October 2017.
- b. It was moved to receive the Minutes of the Strategy Working Group Minutes held on 16 October 2017, a verbal update had previously been received.
- c. It was moved to receive the Minutes of the Strategy Working Group Meeting held on 31 October 2017. Councillor Salt asked if the Strategy meetings could be held in the evening.

57. RESIDENTS OF SOUTH VIEW- PARKING AND ONE-WAY SYSTEM UPDATE

Councillor Hart noted that the Civic Committee had discussed the employment of a traffic consultant; further discussion about the one way system would take place at the Civic Committee. Councillor Salt had not been aware of the consultant when requesting the item on this agenda.

Councillor Hart noted that the District Council had denied the request for parking permits to South View residents.

Councillor Nicosia noted that Newcastle Borough Council offered a variety of parking permits, and queried if it would be feasible to offer something similar to South View residents.

Councillor Hart noted that overnight parking on Wharf Road car park was free of charge between 3.30 pm - 9.30 pm. He added that the District Council did not have a variety of parking schemes.

Councillor Wood was Vice Chair of Services Committee at the District Council and would ask for the parking issue to be put on the agenda, if it was good practice in other areas.

Councillor Lawson reiterated that parking was free overnight on Wharf Road car park and the District Council would not give an inch on free parking as it would set a precedent. There was one resident with a pass who was a blue badge holder who could not park on the street; this was 'flogging a dead horse!'

Councillor Wood would look into whether a permit system was feasible.

Councillor Jones noted that this was not a County Council issue, it should be raised as an item on the Services agenda; he felt that saying no was not on, some sort of discounted parking should be possible when the car cannot be parked outside the house.

Councillor Salt noted that Councillor Edwin Wain was the Portfolio Holder and he had said no. She added that there was no other street in the Moorlands with the same position; residents had no choice but to park on the car park.

Councillor Nicosia noted that residents parking permits in Newcastle Borough Council were £47 a year, which she thought quite reasonable.

58. 93 BUS UPDATE (ITEM REQUESTED BY COUNCILLOR JONES)

Councillor Jones was concerned about the feedback from the County Council about removing the 93 bus service from the town; they had overruled the petition and ignored the letter from the Doctors. There would be no discussion about options. Councillor Jones felt this Council should insist on discussion of other options, and maybe talk with D & G about changing the times, or diverting other routes to Biddulph Moor.

The Chief Officer noted that the matter had been called in at the County Council by the Labour Councillors; the Cabinet meeting would be held on 5 December 2017 and would be available on the webcast.

Councillor Jones noted that there had been no communication with this Council.

Councillor McGuinness noted that Cheshire East had a similar problem, but after being challenged it had found the money. He added that the services 93 and 9 did not connect, causing problems for hospital appointments. Councillor McGuinness had contacted the local MP, who was contacting the Transport Minister Chris Grayling. Councillor Harper congratulated Councillor McGuinness on his tenacity.

Councillor Lovatt noted that 2024 people had returned documents and Biddulph respondents had accounted for one fifth of these, several individual letters had also been received. There had been no option to save the 93. There was no reprieve and a 6 month delay had been requested. Concern was expressed about bus users from both Gillow Heath and Biddulph Moor and students of Leek College.

Councillor Salt felt that this Council should consider launching a community transport scheme in Biddulph and noted that voluntary transport run by Support Staffordshire was running at capacity.

Councillor Rogers wondered if the 2000 signing the petition had ever used the 93 bus.

Councillor Wood was disappointed that the County Council had not listened. They have not considered the bigger picture and the impact on social deprivation. This decision was very short-sighted.

59. REMINDER ABOUT LIBRARY CONSULTATION

Councillor Hart thought that the Town Council should consider options for the library in Biddulph before the consultation began in the New Year. The Chief Officer had received a letter in September about further, which had previously been circulated to Councillors.

Councillor Hart had been made aware of the Wellbeing Centre at Werrington library, and wondered whether this would be a good model for Biddulph.

Councillor Jones thought it would be a good idea to investigate what could be done in Biddulph.

Councillor Wood noted that this was the next phase of the 2015 consultation.

Councillor Jones asked if the mobile library service was still in use, if not it should be resurrected and improved.

Councillor Harper thought this was a first rate idea and proposed forming a working group. Councillor Hart asked that anyone interested contact the Chief Officer.

Councillor Nicosia asked if people borrowed more at Werrington. Councillor Hart understood that they did; people joined the library after calling in for a different service. Councillor Nicosia noted that Biddulph library was well used, with a variety of groups including 'Knit n Natter'.

Councillor Salt would be interested to see Werrington and wondered if it was under volunteer control, Councillor Hart replied that it was. Councillor Salt noted that Biddulph was not on the list to be run by volunteers.

Councillor McGuinness noted that the consultation would run from 1st January 2018 for 12 weeks. The Government had stopped funding libraries and this had to be picked up by the County Council. He noted that the consultation would only be available in the library. He proposed that the consultation should be publicised widely.

Councillor Jones noted that there would be consultation and then it would be cut; forming a Plan B was a good thing.

Councillor Lawson noted that Gill Heath was the County Council Portfolio Holder for libraries.

Councillor Rushton agreed with the increased publicity noting that word of mouth was a good way to engage, but local radio should be encouraged to be out on the street.

60. DESIGNING YOUR LOCAL HEALTH SERVICE, IN RELATION TO HAYWOOD HOSPITAL

Councillor Lovatt wished to make Councillors aware that she had been invited to a pre-consultation meeting at the Haywood Hospital. Councillor Lovatt had no confidence that the decision had not already been taken to cut services and felt this was another step in the ongoing privatisation of the NHS. The consultation is also available on the website with a list of services affected.

Councillor Lovatt requested the Chair's permission to discuss the issue of the permanent diversion of Footpath 29, incorporating 'the tunnel'. Councillor Lovatt proposed to seek an estimate from a structural engineer for repair or alternatives. All were in favour.

A phased approach could be considered as it was a substantial project and would require the cooperation of the landowner. Councillor Lovatt noted that costings had not been calculated, grants could be sought.

61. UPDATE ON BIDDULPH GRANGE COUNTRY PARK: • CONSTITUTED GROUP MEETING

Councillor Jones reported that discussions appeared to have stalled between the District Council and the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust; he was unsure when and where an agreement would be reached.

An open meeting would be held in the Council Chamber on 29 November 2017 to formally constitutionalise the 'friends of' group. A brief presentation would be followed by the election of officers, a light buffet would be provided.

- **MANAGEMENT OF THE VISITOR CENTRE**

Councillor Jones reported that the offer of the Visitor Centre had been withdrawn; the wiring was not fit for use and had suffered rodent damage. Councillor Jones reported that the building would probably be closed for 6 months. He had asked that the building was properly assessed and that the repairs were carried out quickly

62. VOLUNTEER EVENT CONSIDERATION- MARCH 2018

The Chief Officer presented a brief plan that had been developed by the Events and Partnerships Officer.

At the August 2017 General Purposes Committee meeting, Councillors requested that Officers consider the feasibility of holding a Volunteer Recruitment Event. The aims would be to:

- Develop capacity within the town by seeking appropriate training for volunteers. This will assist with the retention of volunteers.
- Support Town Council projects such as Civic events, footpath monitoring, Neighbourhood Planning, etc.
- Provide an opportunity for partners to seek appropriate volunteers and publicise their work.

All were in favour of developing this further.

63. DEMENTIA CARE ACTION PLAN

The Chief Officer presented an action plan that had been developed as part of the work on becoming a member of the Dementia Action Alliance. At the June 2017 Town Council meeting, Councillors confirmed that they wished to investigate becoming a member of the Dementia Action Alliance (DAA). Since that time, the Events and Partnerships Officer has considered how the Town Council can respond effectively to the requirements of membership. Organisations become a member by signing up to the National Dementia Declaration and submitting a short action plan setting out how they are delivering the outcomes described in the Declaration. This plan is then published on the DAA website.

Thanks were expressed to the Events and Partnerships Officer for producing the plan.

Councillor Harper had attended a 'dementia friends' course and not found it arduous.

Councillor Baddeley had recently completed a lasting power of attorney which would safeguard her wishes; it had only cost £89. She was approaching a milestone in her life and considered this worth investigating.

Councillor Salt had also completed the dementia friend course and found it really useful. She noted that the Fire Service would carry out a safe and well visit on request.

Councillor McGuinness noted that Age Concern had a similar programme.

A vote was taken and all were in favour of adopting the plan and continuing to work on becoming a member of the Dementia Action Alliance.

64. CHIEF OFFICER'S REPORT (TO BE TABLED)

1. Police and Crime Commissioner Updates

- **Road Safety idea for Town and Parish Councils- Matthew Ellis**

I am writing with a slightly obscure idea which might be of benefit to councils that are seeking to reduce the speed of traffic through their area.

In addition to requests for Safety Camera Partnership intervention and the reinvigorated Community Speed Watch which is now working well, there may be another opportunity to encourage better speed awareness for drivers.

I recently met with a parish council who were looking at using their own funding to buy interactive speed signs, some of which use the 'pester power' of youngsters to encourage slower driving in populated areas. The speed sensitive signs they have identified as suitable praise or criticise drivers passing them in an imaginative, animated way.

It occurred to me that there may be other councils or community groups which might wish to consider this and by doing so in a coordinated way, could reduce the cost. It is important to understand that my office's involvement is not about 'formal procurement' but simply encouraging a joined up approach to buying in greater numbers so all pay less.

I would be most grateful if you could email my Executive Assistant at veronica.powell@staffordshire.pcc.pnn.gov.uk to register your expression of interest by the 15 December 2017.

- **PCC response to HMICFRS latest report into police efficiency**

Police and Crime Commissioner for Staffordshire, Matthew Ellis, said:

'Well done to Staffordshire Police for maintaining a good standard of service in difficult times.

'Despite an environment of tight finances, evolving crime types and ever more complex challenges in keeping individuals safe, they are doing well.

'My thanks go to all involved in policing here as our work continues with the Force to modernise technology, improve joint working between forces regionally and nationally, whilst ensuring communities across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent are safe.'

- **Welcoming our new ICV recruits**

Eleven new Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) will be welcomed into the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner – boosting our number to just under 50.

2. Staffordshire County Council- Diversion of Vehicular Traffic

Hurst Road, 8 January 2018 for tree surgery work which should be completed on the same day.

3. Tree Charter

We have a tree! We are considering where to plant this and how to celebrate signing the Tree Charter. Any ideas appreciated.

4. Gritting Arrangements

Winter started on the third Monday in October. The County Council website contains a gritting route map.

Please consider whether the Ice Busters scheme could be relevant in your ward. Grit and advice can be provided for residents.

5. Ambulance meeting

A reminder: Councillors are invited to visit the Stoke Ambulance hub and meet Nathan Hudson from West Midlands Ambulance Service on **Friday 15 December at 2pm.**

Please advise whether you are able to attend.

Councillor Hart expressed an interest in attending.

Councillor Jones had recently attended a civic event and spoken to the Chief Executive Officer of West Midlands Ambulance Service Anthony Marsh; he had been assured that there were no plans to remove response cars from Biddulph.

Councillor Nicosia requested a dozen speed signs between Rock End and Knypersley crossroads.

Councillor Harper wished 'Mr Ellis into obscurity'.

Councillor Lawson noted that Mr Ellis had submitted his plan, the Home Secretary had returned it to the Police and Crime Commissioner. The County Council Chief Executive Officer would be the independent adjudicator.

The meeting closed at 8.32 pm

Signed Date