

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 17 OCTOBER 2017

PRESENT

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

Also in attendance:

Councillor Hawley
Councillor Redfern

43.17 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence and reasons accepted were received from:

The Mayor Councillor Wood
Councillor Hart
Councillor Swift

44. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- a Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Dispensations: Councillor Sheldon in any matters concerning Biddulph in Bloom.
- b Other Disclosable Interests.

45. MINUTES

- a. It was moved to sign the Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 19 September 2017.
- b. It was moved to receive the Minutes of the Biddulph Grange Country Park Working Group meeting held on 20 September 2017.
- c. It was moved to receive the Minutes of the Allotments Annual General Meeting held on 25 September 2017. Councillor Salt asked for clarification about the asbestos on the site. The Chief Officer confirmed that it had not been put into the skip and would be dealt with in the correct manner.

- d. It was moved to receive the Minutes of the Allotments Sub-Committee Meeting held on 25 September 2017.
- e. It was moved to receive the Minutes of the Burial Grounds Sub-Committee held on 10 October 2017.

**46. RESIDENTS OF SOUTH VIEW - PARKING AND ONE-WAY SYSTEM
(REQUESTED BY COUNCILLOR SALT)**

Councillor Salt reported on the 'saga of South View'. County Councillor Flunder had previously given an update at the Civic Committee. District Councillors were encouraged to approach the District Council about free parking at Wharf Road for the displaced residents.

Councillor Hall had informed the Portfolio Holder.

Councillor Salt reported that residents had nowhere to park, no driveways, there had been an understanding that they could park at Saxon Tyres. This was no longer possible and the residents were sympathetic towards the business owner. Residents perceived South View as a rat run, and felt that the mini roundabout was dangerous; the report from Amey had resulted in the Town Council agreeing that the one-way project was too expensive.

Councillor Salt had approached David Greatbatch (Community Infrastructure Liaison Manager, Staffordshire County Council) and read a lengthy email response from him at the Civic Committee. There were two options: either sort it ourselves or wait for the County Council. Councillor Salt had updated residents.

Councillor Lawson reported there had been too many objections regarding access to the one-way proposal.

Councillor Jones felt that this was tacitly a green light to investigate further. Councillor Lovatt would like an official response; Councillor Hall felt that we needed a further response.

Councillor Jones suggested giving a nudge to the Portfolio Holder at Leek. He felt that we needed clarity in writing about what we can and can't do at Wharf Road and South View. We were at liberty to investigate our own solutions.

Councillor Jackson suggested asking the County Council what we can do; he did not think that the Town Council had authority to put in road traffic orders. Councillor Jones thought we could put in a scheme.

Councillor McGuinness noted that St Lawrence's Church owned the Hall on South View. He had spoken to Mr Lovatt of Saxon Tyres, who rented the building from the church. He expressed concern that housing developer would sell the properties with parking permits; this would add another £10,000 to the price of the homes.

Councillor Salt said that there were currently 9 car owners needing parking.

Councillor Lawson noted that parking bays would not be installed if South View was made one way.

Councillor Jones proposed that a letter is sent to the District Council requesting free parking passes for the residents of South View and a further letter to the County Council asking for re-consideration of the one-way system implementation.

47. TO NOTE THE RESPONSE FROM COUNCILLOR HELEN FISHER IN RELATION TO THE 93 BUS SERVICE (EMAIL ATTACHED)

Councillor Jones felt that the County Council had missed the point; the 93 bus was a vital public service.

Councillor Redfern had been dependent on buses for over a year, the consultation did not give an option for route 93; he felt this confirmed that the decision had already been made. The reply was offensive and had missed the point.

Councillor Salt concurred adding that the public relied on the bus to access social and health care and would be totally disconnected without the service.

Councillor Jones felt we should write to state that we did not accept that we would not be involved in the ongoing discussion; he thought it was disgraceful and proposed that a further letter is sent.

All agreed.

Councillor McGuinness said the letter completely contradicts what was said here. D&G buses had been summoned to a meeting at the County Council; the 93 route was not on the agenda.

Councillor Jackson noted that 'the left-hand did not know what the right-hand was doing'; he felt that the tone of letter seemed to infer that the decision had already been made.

Councillor Jones noted that there were other options which needed to be considered.

Councillor McGuinness noted that the County Council had completely ignored the letter sent by Biddulph Doctors.

Councillor Lawson added that the works were under Mark Deaville and Gill Heath. He would be meeting Councillor Deaville on 19 October and would bring up the 93.

Councillor Salt noted that all Councillors support the retention of the 93 bus. She noted that the County Councillor needed to represent the people of Biddulph, not his party.

Councillor Lovatt proposed that the second letter is sent forthwith.

48. TO CONSIDER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INDEPENDENT FRIENDS OF BIDDULPH GRANGE COUNTRY PARK, WITH SEPARATE CONSTITUTION-COUNCILLOR JONES

Councillor Jones reported that the Working Group which was currently a sub-committee, wished to become fully constitutionalised. This followed several months of discussions and consideration that autonomy may enable to group to receive additional funding.

This was proposed by Councillor Hall and seconded by Councillor Rushton, a vote was taken and agreed.

49. TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE ON THE STRATEGY GROUP MEETING HELD ON 16 OCTOBER 2017 AND UPDATE ON 2017/18 ACTION PLAN (TABLED)

The Chief Officer reported on the meeting in the absence of its Chair - Councillor Hart - and tabled an updated version of the 2017-18 Action Plan.

The Group proposed compiling a list of priorities over the coming months to develop a 2018-19 Action Plan. In addition to this, the Chief Officer would develop an overarching strategic document highlighting the aims and objectives of the Council. The Group would meet again in the New Year.

Councillor Salt thought this was a superb piece of work, but wondered if it might be improved with green, amber and red markings. The Chief Officer responded that this had been considered at the meeting and the Group had felt that this would detract from the content of the plan and what had been achieved.

Councillor Jackson asked who had attended. This Group had been established as a Sub-Committee of this Committee; the Chief Officer and Town Councillors were the only attendees. Councillor Salt noted that it was difficult for her to attend when meetings were held during the day as she worked full-time

50. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE TREE CHARTER

The Chief Officer circulated copies of 'Leaf' and a document that highlighted the 10 principles, which are: 'We believe in...

- Thriving habitats for diverse species
- Planting for the future
- Celebrating the cultural impact of trees
- A thriving forestry sector that delivers for the UK
- Better protection for important trees and woods
- Enhancing new development with trees
- Understanding and using the natural benefits of trees
- Access to trees for everyone
- Addressing threats to woods and trees through good management
- Strengthening landscapes with wood and trees.'

The project would be launched on 6 November 2017, the 800th anniversary of the influential Charter of the Forest.

Councillor Redfern suggested that everyone could sign one sheet adding an email if further information was requested.

All agreed that the Town Council should sign the Charter. This was important given the status of 'Garden Town of Staffordshire' and the work of Biddulph in Bloom.

Councillor Nicosia remembered the 1973 initiative 'Plant a tree in 73'; Bateman Girls Secondary School had taken this up and she saw the trees every day from her front window.

It was agreed to apply for a tree, liaising with Councillor Sheldon. The Chief Officer thought it could be a replacement tree for one that would need to be removed from the Burial Ground.

51. CHIEF OFFICER'S REPORT

1. Police and Crime Commissioner Updates Commissioner sees armed capabilities

Staffordshire's Police and Crime Commissioner says Staffordshire Moorlands residents can be reassured by the standard of the Force's firearms capability after spending half a day with the Armed Response Unit.

Staffordshire Police are further increasing their armed capacity and capability over coming months.

2. 'Highways and Rights of Way -Your choices' (letter attached) New Staffordshire County Council website designed to support local councils in helping to keep their areas looking good and working well.

Staffordshire's local councils will soon be able to access a wealth of information and advice about their options to keep their areas looking good and working well. From Monday 16th October, the new '*Highways and Rights of Way -Your choices*' website will be live and ready for all local councils to explore.

As well as detailing the change in local government income and role in the community, the website also showcases:

- the tasks that local councils have the powers to manage including those largely aesthetic, non-statutory tasks that have historically been delivered through the Lengthsman scheme and by the Neighbourhood Highways Teams
- the tasks that local councils can carry out on the rights of way network
- advice on what to consider when carrying out specific tasks - with all the information you need on one page
- case studies of local councils both in Staffordshire and beyond who have liaised with the county council for help and advice and then gone on to successfully manage tasks such as stiles maintenance, hedge cutting, winter gritting on pathways and vegetation on pathways and verges

- case studies of local councils working together to administer and fund Lengthsman services
- additional resources and documents to recruit and maintain a volunteer network and links to independent help and advice from the National Local Council Association.

The website also gives local councils direct access to more information about the rights of way consultation, which starts on Monday 16th October for ten weeks. The consultation will propose new standards for how the county council maintains public footpaths and bridleways from April 2018, and will give everyone with a passion for our rights of way network the chance to help maintain these important community assets.

3. Local Councillor Training Course – Tuesday 14 November 2017

Due to demand we have arranged another Local Councillor Training Course, for Tuesday 14 November 2017. The topics being discussed are:

- Profile of an Active Council
- Profile of a Local Councillor
- A Good Chairman
- The Role of the Clerk
- The Council as Employer
- The Law and Local Councils
- Administrative Duties
- Section 137
- Council Budgets and Precepts
- What's on the Agenda
- The Localism Act 2011
- Planning
- The Nolan Principles

Date: Tuesday 14 November 2017

Time: 7.00pm – 9.00pm

Venue: Trentham / Rudyard Suite, Staffordshire Place One, Tipping Street, Stafford ST16 2LP

Please contact the Chief Officer for further booking information.

4. Trip to London and Private Tour of Westminster- Thursday 16 November 2017

Letter from Karen Bradley MP received; for more information about how to book a place and detail about the day's activities, please contact the Chief Officer.

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.”

The meeting closed at 9.00 pm

Signed Date