

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 17 MAY 2016

PRESENT

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

Also in attendance:
Councillor Court
Councillor Harper
Councillor Hawley
Councillor Redfern

1.16. ELECTION OF CHAIR

The Mayor called for nominations for Chair of the General Purposes Committee.

Councillor Hall nominated Councillor Hart for Chair, this was seconded by Councillor Davies. There were no other nominations and Councillor Hart was duly elected.

Councillor Hart called for nominations for Vice Chair. Councillor Hall nominated Councillor Jones, this was seconded by Councillor Harper. There were no other nominations and Councillor Jones was duly elected.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from
Councillor Baddeley
Councillor Lawson
Councillor Sheldon

3. 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.
- b Other Disclosable Interests. None were declared.

4. MINUTES

It was **Resolved** to sign the Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 19 April 2016.

5. FEEDBACK FROM BEMERSLEY LIAISON MEETING

Councillor Jackson thanked Councillors Hart and Sheldon and committee member Councillor Redfern for attending the recent Bemersley Waste Recycling Centre Liaison Committee meeting. It had been the most pleasant meeting of that group. The main issue was noise and a lengthy discussion took place of ways to get over the problem. Councillor Jackson thought it might be worth this Council 'oiling the wheels' on the cost of this work as it would pay dividends down the line

Councillor Redfern noted that the Environment Agency had said that the site was operating legally within parameters and every reasonable action possible had been taken. The Committee would be moving from 6 monthly to annual meetings. Residents had been given emergency contact details.

Councillor Harper thanked Councillors Jackson and Redfern for their efforts.

Councillor McGuinness said it was fantastic news for the area. It had been reported that a £7,000,000 grant for a super tip had been awarded to Stoke on Trent City Council, the location was yet to be decided.

Councillor Hart said that the needs of the many outweighed the few. He asked the representative to keep a close eye on behind the scenes activities.

6. MEETINGS ATTENDED DURING THE MONTH

Reports from members attending meetings of outside bodies where important information relating to Biddulph has been received.

Councillor Hart left the meeting at this point and Councillor Jones took the chair

- a Councillor Lovatt had attended a consultation on 11 May hosted by the District Council about the Local Plan. Councillor Lovatt felt that Biddulph had been let down by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council: the leaflets advertising the event had been delivered to households inside a Farmfoods leaflet meaning that many people did not know about the meeting; there were only two maps of this area available for inspection and people had to crowd around either a table or a display board. Councillor Walley and The Chief Officer worked together to make copies of the maps. Councillor Lovatt had challenged officers of SMDC at the meeting and was told that cost was the issue and that people could visit the website to make comments. However, Councillor Lovatt explained that this involved a login and registration which was not made clear, or you went around in circles. Councillor Lovatt felt that the whole event was a 'total shambles'.

Councillor Jones concurred.

Councillor Harper concurred adding that members of the public felt that the Council was not a listening council and struggled to differentiate between District and Town Council Plans.

Councillor Redfern agreed that it was a farce and noted that the response slips had also run out. The public had become hot and flustered and there was general dissatisfaction, which had not done the District Council's case any good whatsoever.

Councillor Wood added that the District Council had not learned a lesson from the first meeting and noted that a number of residents' complaints had not registered online. He added that there were not enough members of staff to log

the information. Councillor Wood advised everyone to check that their comments had been counted.

Councillor Rogers questioned why the tables were all huddled together in the middle of the room and thought that the Officers were at fault. One new site would only have a six week consultation where the rest of the town had twelve months.

Councillor Nicosia said that Officers were paid to do the job and had been unprofessional and had not learned from the past which frustrated people; we as a Town Council had felt the rough edge of it. Councillor Nicosia asked if we could do anything.

Councillor Jones said that we should be firm and say 'No, we don't want it and we are not having it'.

Councillor Jackson said that everyone had complaints. New District Council Officers had come to the process late in the day, and lessons had not been learned. Councillor Jackson proposed that a strongly worded letter is sent to the District Council Chief Officer and Mr Dai Lerner asking for a reply guaranteeing that this type of thing did not happen again, this was seconded by Councillor Lovatt. It was Agreed to send the letters forthwith.

Councillor Salt added that it was important that Councillors back the Neighbourhood Plan as this is an opportunity to make a difference.

- b Councillor Hawley reported on a Neighbourhood Plan working group meeting held on 5 May 2016. There would be a meeting with the planners on 9 June 2016 to show them our ideas and to take things forwards. He noted that some of the Green Belt would have to go, but added that he was receiving lots of feedback and the Neighbourhood Plan was wider ranging and is for Biddulph and not the Staffordshire Moorlands.

Councillor Jones noted that the numbers were not negotiable.

Councillor Jackson added that Councillor Hawley was doing a tremendous job on the Neighbourhood Plan. He added that the strongest NIMBY would push the allocation to other places, but that roofs over people's heads were more important than fields.

Councillor Hawley added that the majority of people live on land that in 1945 was a field. Biddulph had to accommodate the given number of extra houses. If a Local Plan is not agreed, Central Government would come in and tell SMDC where to put housing.

Councillor Hart returned to the Chamber and took the chair.

- c Councillor McGuinness reported on an exhibition he had attended at Biddulph library on 13 April 2016, 100 years history of transport in the local area by Adrian Lawton. The event had been poorly advertised, some of the comments received: many in favour of the direct link to the Royal Stoke University Hospital; negative about the bus hub and lack of illumination in winter. Councillor McGuinness had spoken to the librarian about holding the exhibition again in the school summer holidays, Councillor McGuinness would attend daily and ask for further comments. He asked if transport could be place on the agenda on a bi-monthly basis.

7. LENGTHSMAN

It was noted that this is the final year for the Lengthsman scheme and thought should be given to its replacement. This will be placed on the agenda for next month.

Councillor Lovatt asked whether there was any progress with the hearing loop. The Chief Officer will make further enquiries.

8. CHIEF OFFICER'S REPORT

1 Diversion of Vehicular Traffic- Hurst Road, 24 May 2016 8-4pm

Electrical pole replacement works, adjacent to Sunny View for a distance of 270 metres.

2 Diversion of Vehicular Traffic- Barrage Road, 2 June 2016 9-4pm

Electrical pole replacement works, from junction with Leek Lane along the length of Barrage Road for a distance of 370 metres.

3 Diversion of Vehicular Traffic- Congleton Road, Mow Cop 27-30 June 2016

Gas works, between the junctions with Tower Hill Road and Roe Park.

4 Allotments

A review of terms and conditions and associated policies and procedures will be undertaken throughout June and July. An Allotments Sub-Committee will be convened to discuss these in detail.

Councillor Jackson asked for an update on the Springfield Road site, The Chief Officer was working on this.

5 Millennium Monument

Councillor Hilda Sheldon has provided photographs of damage to the Millennium Monument. The stone mason will try to repair the stone work and an estimate is being provided.

The meeting closed at 8.50 pm.

Signed Date