

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2014

PRESENT

The Mayor - Councillor Swift
The Deputy Mayor - Councillor Adams
Councillor Baddeley
Councillor Davies
Councillor Deane
Councillor Hall
Councillor Hart - Chair
Councillor Harper
Councillor Hawley
Councillor Jackson
Councillor Lovatt
Councillor Rogers
Councillor Sheldon MBE
Councillor Tolley
Councillor Whilding
Councillor Wood

Also in attendance:
Councillor Redfern
Councillor Walley

63.14 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence and reasons accepted were received from:

Councillor Deaville
Councillor Ellsum
Councillor Gibson
Councillor Jones

64. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- a Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Dispensations:
- b Other Disclosable Interests: Councillor Sheldon in any matters relating to Biddulph in Bloom, as Chairman.

65. MINUTES

- a It was **Resolved** to sign the Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 21 October 2014, including the Confidential Minute.

66. AMBULANCE COVER IN BIDDULPH

Councillor Harper reported that a possible problem had been identified with ambulance cover in Biddulph; this had been brought up at a recent District Council meeting of the Health and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Harper then read out a string of facts regarding the West Midlands area: Covers 5,000 square miles; population 5.36 million; area of Staffs Moorlands is 80% rural; 50% of the W Midlands population was in urban areas; there were 1,000,000

non-emergency calls last year, with 2 operational centres; Biddulph Lifeline has installed defibrillators in the town.

Councillor Harper feared that emergency calls were being downgraded, therefore falling into a longer response time category than the current target of 8 minutes for priority cases. He had received information that ambulance cover had been diverted to nearby Stoke on Trent at evenings and weekends due to the pressure on urban areas. The information had come from both members of the public and members of the ambulance service, who were very concerned.

Councillor Redfern thought that this sounded alarming, though in his personal experience response had arrived within the emergency time frame. Councillor Wood thanked Councillor Harper for raising this, and went on to speak on the growing trend of budget cuts within NHS and its various trusts. He had friends who were St Johns Ambulance volunteers; they reported that they were currently covering the core of the work. Councillor Wood proposed that this Council requests statistics to ensure that we had the best possible service for our residents and that representatives of the Trust should be invited to a future meeting to discuss the issue with members. Councillor Harper responded that response times were set out by central government. Councillor Rogers asked for a definition of response time; this was explained as from the time a person phones until someone arrived at the scene.

Councillor Wood's proposal was seconded by Councillor Hall. A vote was taken and all were in favour of sending the letter forthwith.

Councillor Hart noted that all Councillors had a vested interest and that we needed the best possible service. The Paramedics in the town were excellent, however concerns had been raised. It was hoped that a response would be received in time for the meeting to be held in January 2015.

67. BIDDULPH YOUTH CENTRE

Antony Capostagno had been unable to attend the meeting; the topic would be raised at a future meeting.

68. CROSSING IN HIGH STREET

A site visit had taken place in south High Street to look at the problem with the raised platform, those attending were County Councillor Lawson, Mr Greatbatch, Councillors, Hart and Rogers and the Chief Officer. Councillor Hart reported that County Highways Officers felt that the weight of the buses on the crossing had caused the problem. The size of the buses on the Biddulph routes had been increased since the crossing had been constructed. Officers had promised to look at how the work had been done and to see if it had been carried out properly. Councillor Rogers said that the quality of the original workmanship had been disputed, he pointed out that he had an experienced friend who opined that the work could be redone much cheaper than the £7,000 quoted by the County Council.

Councillor Tolley said that he had raised concerns at the poor workmanship at the time of construction and felt that Enterprise should be made to redo the work properly under the terms of their contract. Councillor Hart pointed out that Enterprise no longer existed. Councillor Deane agreed that the work had been done incorrectly in first place, but noted that buses went over all the raised platforms in town not just one and the others had not deteriorated.

Councillor Hart noted that no work would be carried out until Spring 2015. Highways officers would contact this Council when they had considered the options.

69. COMMUNICATIONS/CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

- a Biddulph Day Unit – a letter had been received giving the date for the closure of the Day Unit as 31 March 2015.

Councillor Wood noted that both District and Town Councils had been fighting the closure and had requested statistics. He felt that the Health Service was treating the Council with contempt. Councillor Wood thought that decision was finance based, that this town was losing service after service and that ultimately the people of Biddulph were suffering. He felt that the Day Centre was vital for the residents of Biddulph, both elderly and their Carers and this Council must raise its opposition at a higher level.

Councillor Rogers asked how many were using the facility, Councillor Lovatt replied 17. Councillor Sheldon felt that 17 users was an artificially low numbers as people hadn't been offered a place. Councillor Walley noted that the 17 users would not be able to go anywhere else, not all users just went 'for a cup of tea'; many used the facilities for personal hygiene needs. Councillor Deane wished everyone the best of luck in trying to stop the closure adding that the centre was an invaluable asset and he couldn't think of anywhere else that the people could go for day care.

Councillor Lovatt reported that she and Councillor Walley had attended the meeting when the closure had been announced. Assurances had been made at that meeting that if the needs of service users could not be met in Biddulph, the Day Unit would not be closed. Councillors Lovatt and Walley would meet during the week to look at further options and would report back to the December meeting.

Councillor Adams felt that more emphasis should be given to how much the carers needed the service; many were elderly and relied on the Centre for a time of respite. It was noted that Carers had received letters to say that the Day Unit would be closing.

Councillor Harper asked if the decision was set in stone and proposed that this Council should write to say that it was not acceptable, seconded by Councillor Lovatt, who asked if the letter could be sent forthwith. This was Moved.

- b A copy of the CAB Impact Report 2014 was received . Councillor Jackson spoke about the amazing work that the CAB had been doing, especially with the increased pressure caused by recent cuts. He added that the Biddulph Bureau was a credit to CAB and the North Staffs. Members were in agreement.
- c Moorlands Assembly: a feedback form had been circulated and comments invited

70. MEETINGS ATTENDED DURING THE MONTH

- a Councillor Hawley had attended the Schools Council meeting at Moor First School. Also in attendance were Councillor Swift, the Town Crier and PCSO Karen Linton. Questions raised by the students included buses, speeding, the crossing patrol at Knypersley, dog dirt on pavements, and an overgrown tree in Conway Road. The students asked if there were any projects they could help with.

- b Councillor Wood had attended a meeting of the Resources and Scrutiny Committee at the District Council, about the Local Enterprise Partnership. Councillor Wood felt that there was an issue with this Council getting potential projects onto that agenda for discussion. Councillor Hart would investigate and report back.

71. LENGSTHMAN WORK

A potential problem on Conway Road had been mentioned at the meeting of the Town Council. The Chief Officer would contact the County Council and then instruct the Lengthsman.

72. CHIEF OFFICER'S REPORT

1 Library Consultation

A letter was received from Councillor Mike Lawrence regarding the next stage of the consultation process.

2 Biddulph in Bloom

A copy of the audited and examined accounts for Biddulph in Bloom and the Annual Report had been received.

3 Moorlands Together Partnership

The Moorlands Together Partnership has launched its new Commissioning Prospectus once again. This is looking to bring local public sector organisations and other organisations together to commission services and projects as a single, streamlined process to benefit Staffordshire Moorlands District residents.

The new prospectus, focused on prevention and early intervention, is aimed at building community resilience and increasing community capacity through funding projects that promote positive wellbeing. They are looking for innovative and evidence based proposals that can deliver measurable achievements in relation to the key outcomes detailed within this Prospectus. Projects will need to aim to identify future replicable or sustainable service models that build social value. The aim is to enable and support communities, individuals and families to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing.

The Commissioning Prospectus for Staffordshire Moorlands is now available. Here is a link to the Prospectus and accompanying documents: <http://www.staffsmoorlands.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/pages/Staffordshire%20Moorlands%20Commissioning%20Prospectus%202015-2018%20FINAL%20Final.pdf>

Please note: The closing date for initial applications is 10th December 2014 and further information may be obtained from laura.cunningham@staffordshire.gov.uk (tel: 07972 619996)

4 Community event – Healthwatch Staffordshire

Healthwatch Staffordshire will be running a large scale public event for Staffordshire Moorlands Residents on **Saturday 22nd November** between **10.00am – 1.30pm** at **Moorlands House, Dove and Trent Rooms**. The public event will allow members of the public and from organisations the opportunity to engage with UHNM staff around the transition of services. The session will include:-

- A Presentation from UHNM Chief Executive, Mark Hackett
- Q & A Session with Panel Members
- Drop In round table discussions

The meeting closed at 8.10 pm

SignedDate.....