

## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BIDDULPH TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 19 MARCH 2019**

The Officer introduced the Town Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Chief Officer; Rev'd Derek Balsdon was invited to lead a time of prayer. The Mayor opened the meeting.

### **PRESENT**

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

### **85.18 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

*The meeting to adjourn for up to 20 minutes (Standing Order 1d-f) to allow for public participation. Residents are invited to give their views and question the Town Council on issues on this agenda, or raise issues for future consideration at the discretion of the Mayor. Members of the public wishing to raise issues which are not on the Agenda should notify the Chief Officer five working days before the meeting. Members of the public may not take part in the Council meeting itself.*

*Residents from Victoria Row were in attendance but had not requested an item for Public Participation.*

Councillor McGuinness noted that there were a number of people in attendance that would like to hear item 9 that was requested by Councillor Salt.

Councillor McGuinness asked whether any residents wished to address the Council and noted that, under normal Standing Orders, residents are not permitted to speak at Town Council meetings unless it is in the Public Participation section of the meeting.

Councillor McGuinness was happy to allow residents to speak within the first section of the agenda. This will be for 20 minutes. The Mayor reminded residents that, under Standing Orders, a question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. As Councillors have not received any information in advance about the nature of the concerns, it may be that the outcome of your discussion is to refer this to a Committee where it can be debated fully.

Councillor Salt read a message. She had become involved with the Victoria Row group as she had read about it on Facebook; concerns had been voiced about the lack of publicity for the Local Plan masterplan consultation event at Knypersley Cricket Club. Concerns were also raised about the land around Victoria Row being removed from the greenbelt.

Councillor Redfern asked for clarification, Councillor McGuinness reminded Councillors that this part of the meeting was for members of the public to speak.

Mr Jackson of Victoria Row asked how far advanced the process was, for removing the area from the greenbelt.

Councillor Hall noted that the views of the people were very important, this item should be moved to the Planning Committee to be discussed fully, with a resolution sent to the Planning Officers at Leek for consideration. The members of the public needed to be in a situation where they could speak. He added that this Council had no power to change things on the Local Plan, it was the District Council which could do this. This was seconded by Councillor Hart.

Barbara Stanton asked what the view of the Town Council was on the building proposals.

Councillor McGuinness responded that this had not been discussed at Town Council.

A further resident added that if, and when, the development went ahead there were not enough schools, GP practices, etc. Why was that site chosen, why not the site behind the Victoria Business Park? The resident was not aware of any discussion about services and residents had fought this proposal twice before.

Councillor Lovatt proposed that Standing Orders be suspended, as we wanted to hear the residents speak and they wanted to hear our response.

Councillor Jones said that this should be discussed at the Planning Committee and not here. A vote should be taken on the motion. He would have declared an interest as he had lived at 22 Victoria Road and had an emotional attachment to the land. It had been in the Local Plan for two years and there had been many consultations; discussion should be paused for now and a vote taken at item 9 of the agenda.

Councillor Lovatt proposed that item 9 is moved forward, seconded by Councillor Jackson.

Councillor Hart declared an interest and would not vote on the residential part of discussions.

## **68. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence and reasons accepted were received from:

Councillor Swift  
Councillor Wood

## **69. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

- a) To declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests & Dispensations: Councillor Rogers in relation to travel expenses.
- b) To declare any Other Disclosable Interests: Minute 85 Councillor Hart declared an interest and would not vote on any Local Plan residential site-specific part of the

discussion. Councillor Jones declared an interest as he lived at 22 Victoria Road and had an emotional attachment to the land. Councillor Sheldon in anything pertaining to Biddulph in Bloom.

## **70. MINUTES**

- a) It was moved to **approve and sign** the Minutes of the meeting the Town Council held on 19 February 2019. amended
- b) It was moved to **receive** the Minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 19 February 2019.
- c) It was moved to **approve and sign** the Minutes of the Special Finance Committee meeting held on 7 March 2019. Councillor Jackson would refer back to this when the item was discussed
- d) It was moved to **approve and sign** the Minutes of the Special Town Council meeting held on 12 March 2019
- e) It was moved to **receive** the Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 12 March 2019.
- f) It was moved to **receive** the Minutes of the Civic Committee meeting held on 12 March 2019.

## **71. ITEM REQUESTED BY COUNCILLOR SALT- CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF LAND OPPOSITE VICTORIA ROW, KNYPERSLEY**

This item was moved from Item 9 on the agenda.

Councillor Salt reiterated that she had seen a post on the social media site Facebook that stated that residents of Victoria Row were upset by the proposed development opposite this road. Councillor Salt noted that she should have passed this information to Ward Councillors. The residents were concerned that they had not been informed of the recent consultation event. Residents asked why the consultation event was held when the Local Plan had not been agreed by the Town Council, why had Biddulph Town Councillors voted for the site to be removed from the Green Belt? What was the Town Council doing now to stop land being ripped up by bulldozers?

Councillor McGuinness noted that they were talking about the District Council; this was not the Town Council's Plan.

Councillor Redfern thanked Councillor Salt for putting this item on the agenda. To avoid doubt, he was opposed to taking this land out of the Green Belt. Industry and housing were inappropriate development; the masterplan event had not been a consultation but an options appraisal. He didn't think he would be here again defending the Green Belt. This area defines the border between Biddulph and Stoke on Trent.

Councillor Harper had 'lost the will to live'. The residents had asked for help and guidance. There were mine ventilation shafts in that area.

Councillor Lawson noted that the reason he had voted to accept the draft Local Plan was that the plans had to go to the government by a certain day, it was 'chaos' at the District Council. The previous name of the street was Fan Row, there were ventilation shafts in the field opposite, it was not a deep mine, there were shafts all over the place.

Councillor Nicosia was happy to see the residents here, she had tried to start a Biddulph South residents group. The site had been on the Local Plan at the 2017 consultation. In summer 2018 Councillor Nicosia had leafleted all the houses in Victoria Row informing them of the consultation event. The consultation room had been nearly empty. Some had fought

this proposal before, she invited them to get together as Biddulph South Residents Association. Councillor Nicosia was frustrated that the residents had come here tonight, her phone number was freely available. She had contacted residents on Conway Road and Harlech Avenue; resulting in some areas being taken out of the Local Plan altogether.

Councillor Hawley noted that the advertising of the event had left a lot to be desired, but the land had been included in all versions of the Local Plan. The District Council had not contacted the Town Council or the Biddulph Neighbourhood Plan Working Group; he added that valid planning reasons were needed when making objections. A further consultation was needed. Councillor Hawley looked forward to seeing the residents at the Planning Committee (if agreed) where this item could be discussed.

Councillor Jones admitted that he did vote to approve the Local Plan, which was for the entire Staffordshire Moorlands and apologised that this piece of land had got lost. The Plan still had to go through the formal approval process; all was not lost. Councillor Jones would join forces to represent the group and views would be heard.

Councillor Lovatt noted that at every Local Plan she had voted against taking land out of the Green Belt. The Inspector had judged that to build on Biddulph Valley Way was flawed. Dai Lerner had written to the Inspector to see if the 80 homes would have to be replaced, Councillor Lovatt had not seen the reply; she thought it scaremongering, people thought if homes were not built there they would have to be built somewhere else. Other sites had been put forward, but not considered.

Councillor Davies thought it an unenviable task; 1000 homes and 5 hectares of industrial land in a densely packed town. He had voted in favour of the Local Plan, it was a difficult thing to do, there were no winners only losers. Councillor Davies thought that there should be a green barrier between Victoria Row and the field in front, but Biddulph needed employment space. Very successful companies to provide jobs, with good value in Biddulph with good connections and on relatively flat land. It was not an enjoyable task but had to be done.

Councillor Rogers assured the public that this was not a waste of time, this Council would listen to what was being said, but Biddulph had to move forwards.

Councillor Hawley suggested that the residents elected a speaker to come to a meeting to put forwards the points, which could then be discussed.

Councillor Jackson thought it would be helpful if the group became involved in the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group as that document would carry weight. Councillor Hawley noted that the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group would meet on Thursday to discuss specific items, but not that site. All would be welcome to attend.

Councillor Jackson proposed that the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group could engage with the residents of Victoria Row within that framework this was seconded by Councillor Lovatt. Councillor Jones noted that they had never been excluded.

Councillor Rushton proposed that the group is invited to the next meeting of the Planning Committee, this was agreed.

**72. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS**

The Mayor had spoken on Moorlands Radio. He had attended Biddulph Rotary's Charter dinner, a very enjoyable evening. The Civic Dinner would be held on Friday 26 April 2019.

**73. TO APPROVE A PHOTOCOPIER CONTRACT FOR A FIVE-YEAR PERIOD (DOCUMENT TO BE TABLED)**

The Officer had researched a number of providers and compared costs against current usage. Councillor Hawley queried whether references had been sourced for the recommended provider; the Officer confirmed that they had. Councillor Salt asked if the cost of leasing a machine was more cost effective than purchasing one; the Officer confirmed that it was.

Proposed by Councillor Hart and seconded by Councillor Harper. Agreed.

**74. TO RECEIVE A RECOMMENDATION FROM THE SPECIAL FINANCE COMMITTEE IN RELATION TO FUNDING AND SUPPORT AVAILABLE FOR THE GREEN TREE HOUSE**

Councillor Hart proposed that this item be moved to the end of the General Purposes Committee to be discussed as a Confidential item. This was agreed.

**75. TO CONSIDER MEMBERSHIP OF THE OPEN SPACES SOCIETY TO SUPPORT FOOTPATH MANAGEMENT**

Councillor Lovatt was the Chair of the Footpaths Sub-Committee. There was an issue with an obstruction with one the paths; Councillor Lovatt proposed that this Council becomes a member of the Open Spaces Society, where formal advice could be sought. The annual fee was £45. This was seconded by Councillor Rushton and agreed.

**76. ITEM REQUESTED BY COUNCILLOR SALT- STRENGTHENING OUR COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY:**

***Biddulph Town Council is fully committed to Equality of Opportunity and embraces the diverse make up of today's society. It is committed to stamping out any form of discrimination and will educate its Councillors, Officers and anyone else closely connected with the working of our Town Council to its commitments, in line with relevant legislation via mandatory awareness sessions. It will also expect its contractors to have read and abide by our Equality and Diversity (E&D) Policy and expect to see reference to E&D in any future tenders, if applicable. In addition, if anyone representing the Town Council is noted to have not acted within the spirit of this resolution, then they will be challenged and if any laws are deemed to have been broken, they will be referred to the appropriate channels to investigate further. This Town Council will not tolerate discrimination and prejudice in any form.***

Councillor Salt thought that in light of posts on Facebook this Council should strengthen its resolution.

Councillor Hall noted that this Council had policies, and this should be referred to the Chief Officer to incorporate within them. Councillor Nicosia asked who would challenge breaches? Councillor Salt would like a stand-alone resolution to make a commitment to the people of the town, everyone should be carrying out checks.

Councillor Jones supported Councillor Hall; if this would enhance the policy we should see where it fits in with existing laws. Councillor Rogers noted that the Staffordshire Parish Councils Association would be holding more courses after the election and would come to Biddulph, if invited.

Councillor Harper was surprised to see this item on the agenda; he was under the impression that staff and Councillors came under the remit of the Human Resources Committee. He supported Councillor Salt in this and would like the item referred to the HR Committee for a full and meaningful discussion. Councillor Hall agreed that this should come under the auspices of the Chief Officer to the HR Committee. Councillor Hart supported this, adding that it could be used as a 'big stick' to beat people with.

Councillor Davies noted that the HR Committee was for consideration of officers and employment. He suggested that this should be passed to the Finance Strategy and Management Committee for further discussion. Councillor Hart added that this did refer to the staff.

Councillor Salt noted that this was not a policy, but a resolution that this Council was totally committed to lack of discrimination and was a reminder of our commitment.

The Chief Officer spoke of the three ways which Biddulph Town Council may address the concerns listed:

- a) Seeking training sessions for the new Councillors and a refresher session for returners
- b) Asking all contractors tendering for a copy of their Diversity Policy
- c) To ensure the current policy challenged discrimination and prejudice in any form.

Councillor Jones reminded Councillors that they should only speak once on an item on the Town Council agenda. No one will argue with it, pass it the Chief Officer and move on.

Councillor Jackson noted that all Councillors were bound by the Code of Conduct, there were some major changes coming. It would sharpen our minds and when in the public eye we need to act in a responsible way.

Councillor Davies noted that all had been said in the first sentence, all other was in the policy.

Councillor Hall proposed this item is passed to the Chief Officer to compare with our Equality and Diversity Policy and bring back to the appropriate committee; this was seconded by Councillor Jones and agreed.

## **77. VERBAL UPDATE ON MANAGEMENT OF BIDDULPH TOWN HALL**

The Chief Officer had met with a local solicitor about the next steps. A two-phase report was being compiled by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council to move this transfer process forward. This also included the Country Park Visitor Centre.

**78. TO APPROVE 2019/20 MEETING DATES- NEW APPROVED COMMITTEE STRUCTURE (TO BE CIRCULATED BY EMAIL)**

Proposed by Councillor Hall, seconded by Councillor Hart and agreed. Councillor Rogers asked about reducing the number of meetings held in August; it may still be necessary to hold some meetings.

**79. ACCOUNTS & FINANCE**

**a) Accounts received for payment in March 2019**

**Expenditure above £500**

**Biddulph in Bloom** 6250.00  
4/4 payments grant

**E-Volve IT Support Ltd** 1524.00  
Website design and implementation  
Training annual support  
Backups and disaster recovery  
1-year web hosting

**Expenditure below £500**

**J Hancock**  
Travel and parking stoke conference  
**Cllr Rogers**  
Travel to Stafford  
**S Haydon** 14.63  
Fair trade materials for  
Fairtrade fortnight display in foyer

**B Harrison** 160.00  
Skip at Park Lane allotment site

**Countrywide Grounds Maintenance** 56.80  
Maintenance  
Land at Springfield Road

**Ash Waste Services** 245.65  
Bins at Town Burial Ground

**Tidysite Skip Services Ltd** 20.10  
Bins at Woodhouse Burial Ground

**Waterplus** 71.35  
Water at Town Burial Ground  
Quarterly

**Waterplus** 28.25  
Water at Woodhouse Burial Ground  
Quarterly

**Triad** 36.90  
VAT part of invoice for notebooks

**SLCC** 300.00

2 x training event How to promote your assets

**Credit Card payments**

<b>Facebook</b>	11.93
Neighbourhood Plan events	
<b>Land Registry</b>	6.00
Local Green Space search – Morris home site	
<b>Land Registry</b>	6.00
Local Green Space search – Morris home site	
<b>Giff gaff</b>	
WIFI monthly charge	7.50
<b>Virgin Trains</b>	27.00
Travel to Birmingham	
Brochure event	
<b>Amazon Marketplace</b>	24.77
2 x uneven path signs	
1.2mm rigid plastic 400mm x 200mm	
<b>Shutterstock</b>	
Monthly clip art charge	19.00
<b>Argos Retail Group</b>	89.99
Replacement Microwave	

**To be paid 1 April 2019**

<b>Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association</b>	1188.00
Annual subscription	
<b>CommuniCorp</b>	75.00
Annual subscription to Local Councils Update	

**BIDDULPH TOWN COUNCIL**

**b) Supplementary Accounts for Payment ~ 19 March 2019**

**Expenditure above £500**

<b>Salaries</b>	5039.72
<b>HMRC</b> to be paid 31 March 2019	1834.86
<b>Staffs Pension Fund</b>	1995.36
<b>Green Tree House</b>	1000.00
Contribution towards rent	
Pending approval of recommendation from	
Finance Committee meeting held 7 March 2019	
<b>Silverman Limited</b>	2460.00
Biddulph 2D map and 3D map embellishment	
<b>HB Clews Ltd</b>	5724.00
Pathway to Biddulph Valley Park	
Contributions towards this work received from	
SMDC and Friends of Biddulph Valley Park	
<b>RPS Consulting Services Ltd</b>	2613.00



Highway Consultancy Services

**Expenditure below £500**

<b>Petty cash</b> Feb-Mar 2019	41.81
<b>Biddulph Moor Village Hall</b> Donation on behalf of Neil Nevill in recognition of work on sound system at lights switch on and Remembrance Sunday events	400.00
<b>J Hancock</b> Travel for meeting in Stoke to and from Kidsgrove station for two events	23.96
<b>Cllr Rogers</b> Travel to Stafford for SPCA meeting	25.20
<b>Ash Waste Services Ltd</b> Revised bill, credited for missed collection	127.47
<b>B Carter</b> Un/lock gates at Woodhouse Burial Ground	40.00
<b>R Standell</b> Taps at Biddulph Town Burial Ground	243.00
<b>Clare Tracey</b> Re-issue cheque 6597	80.00

**To be paid on 1 April 2019**

<b>SMDC</b> property rate for Cemetery	432.08
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The meeting was adjourned at 8.45.

The meeting reconvened at 9.00 pm after the close of the General Purposes Committee.

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 9.15 pm

Signed ..... Date .....