

MINUTES OF THE CIVIC COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 12 MARCH 2019

PRESENT

The Mayor - Councillor McGuinness
The Deputy Mayor - Councillor Davies
Councillor Baddeley
Councillor Court
Councillor Hall
Councillor Hart
Councillor Jackson
Councillor Jones
Councillor Lawson
Councillor Rogers
Councillor Rushton
Councillor Sheldon
Councillor Swift
Councillor Whilding

also in attendance

Councillor Hawley
Councillor Redfern

Councillor Flunder

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from

Councillor Nicosia
Councillor Salt
Councillor Wood

Councillor Davies moved that Standing Orders be suspended to allow Councillor Flunder to address the meeting; proposed by Councillor Hart and seconded by Councillor Jones. All agreed.

Councillor Flunder reported that Mr Greatbatch (County Highways) was willing to take on board the work on the pavements in Park Lane and Conway Road and the South View project; Councillor Flunder would also consult with Councillor Fisher.

Councillor Flunder would meet with Councillor Winnington and Officers on Monday about the Town Deal and the High Street 'debacle'.

Councillor Jones asked about the traffic calming measures. Councillor Flunder replied that speed bumps had been considered impractical, signage would be installed. Councillor Jones responded that the request had been for build-outs, Councillor Flunder would bring this up with Councillor Lawson. Councillor Lawson noted that the road was too narrow for build-outs and the cost was prohibitive, consideration would be given to a gateway at the entrances.

Councillor Davies asked about the proposed loading bay in the North High Street. Councillor Flunder noted that the remainder of the £7,000 DHP would be held over for another year.

Councillor Hart gave a detailed history of the request for loading bays in the North High Street.

Standing Orders were reinstated.

67. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests & Dispensations: None
- b) Other Interests: Councillor Sheldon anything pertaining to Biddulph in Bloom.
Councillor Hart was the Staffordshire Moorlands designate at Enjoy Staffordshire.

68. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 12 February 2019 were signed as an accurate record.

69. STATION ROAD UPDATE

Councillor Jackson noted that listing the road as a community asset had been discussed previously; he proposed that this action is taken, seconded by Councillor Jones and agreed. Councillor Jackson noted that this would make the land less attractive to potential bidders. The Chief Officer would follow this up.

70. DEMONSTRATION OF NEW BIDDULPH WEBSITE

The Events and Partnerships Officer led members on a guided tour of the new website.

The Chief Officer noted that it would contain much more information than the previous site, and was easier to populate. It would become the place to go to find out about Biddulph. Stakeholders would be encouraged to send information for the pages.

Councillor Sheldon added that Sandbach was advertising the annual meeting on a large banner, she wondered if this Council could follow suit to let the community know that Biddulph's was taking place. Councillor Davies thought the new website would work well.

Councillor Jackson thanked the staff for progressing the new website.

71. DONATION TO BIDDULPH MOOR VILLAGE HALL IN RECOGNITION OF REMEMBRANCE AND CHRISTMAS ACTIVITIES BY NEIL NEVILL

The Chief Officer noted that Mr Nevill spent a lot of time setting up the sound system for each event in 2018. The previous year a donation of £300 had been made on his behalf to the Biddulph Moor Village Hall; this was only for work at the lights switch on.

Councillor Whilding proposed £500. Councillor Hart proposed £400; this was seconded by Councillor Rushton, Councillor Whilding withdrew his proposal. It was agreed to give £400 to Biddulph Moor Village Hall on behalf of Mr Nevill.

72. FUTURE HIGH STREET FUND UPDATE

Councillor Davies noted that there had been a certain amount of disquiet about the way the decision had been made at the District Council. The Cabinet decision had been called in; ten Biddulph District Councillors had made the request.

Councillor Rogers noted that the Fund was not as straightforward as he had thought; Councillors in Cheadle were now concerned about how they would contribute to the co-funding that was required.

Councillor Hart added that it was not that Cheadle don't deserve it, it was the decision-making process which was in question. He was not sure that the process had been transparent.

Councillor Jackson thanked all ten District Councillors who had signed the call in and fully understood Councillor Hall's position and reason for not signing. It was about the process gone through, he didn't think it was transparent. Councillor Jackson added that it was not necessarily the Town Council that had to match fund, industry e.g. JCB in Cheadle could help. He noted that Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) did not seem to be involved.

Councillor Jackson reported on a new government initiative the Stronger Towns Fund for towns that were 'left behind'. There would be sizeable pot to be dispersed over a number of years. It encourages communities to become involved and these bids would be looked on in a better light. Councillor Jackson encouraged this Council to be proactive and gather information together, so that as soon as the criteria was announced in late summer we would be ready to bid. Councillor Hall added that we should have projects ready to go when the funds were released. Councillor Sheldon thanked Councillor Jackson for giving a prompt to this Council to join in, we should be shovel-ready.

73. DEVELOPMENT OF A BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BID); THE CHIEF OFFICER TO MAKE INVESTIGATIONS

Councillor Davies reported that the Chief Officer had requested permission to look into other opportunities to develop the High Street and access different pots of money. This was proposed by Councillor Davies and seconded by Councillor Hart, all agreed. Councillor Hall added that if the Chief Officer sees opportunities, she should take them.

Councillor Jackson noted that we had been wise as a Council to build up a war chest of cash to be ready to go when opportunities arise, we deserve a pat on the back for foreseeing to oil the wheels. Councillor Hart agreed. Councillor Sheldon thanked Councillor Hall for guiding the finances carefully.

74. TO CONSIDER ENJOY STAFFORDSHIRE MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

The Chief Officer gave a brief recap, in 2018/19 this Council had paid for Gold membership. In 2019/20 it would be £200 for Gold membership, Silver was £180 and Bronze £150. Statistics of usage were shared with members. Councillor Hart noted that statistics had shown that some people had viewed the listing and changed their itinerary to visit the town.

Councillor Davies thought it would be good to direct people to the new website. The Chief Officer noted that the new website had capacity for video upload. Councillor Davies noted that Biddulph in Bloom had a DVD guided tour of the town.

Councillor Jackson was disappointed in the figures bearing in mind that we had Biddulph Grange on our doorstep, this was not reflected in the figures. He wondered if we were missing links with Biddulph Grange, adding that we missed the spin-offs as there was not much to offer in the town. We should establish better connections.

Councillor Hart proposed taking up the Silver membership, this was seconded by Councillor Jones and agreed.

75. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Councillor Davies reported that a few more traffic signs would be needed for the Artisan Market, they would say that the Artisan Market was on that day and that the shops were open, as suggested by Councillor Rogers. The cost would be £639.62, it was proposed by Councillor Davies to buy these signs, seconded by Councillor Jones and agreed.

The meeting closed at 7.35 pm

Signed Date