

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BIDDULPH TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 8 OCTOBER 2019

The Town Crier introduced the Town Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Chief Officer. The Mayor invited the Town Crier to lead a time of prayer.

The Mayor opened the meeting and reminded members of Standing Orders when speaking at a meeting of the Town Council.

PRESENT

The Mayor Councillor Davies
The Deputy Mayor – Councillor Jones
Councillor Adams
Councillor Barlow
Councillor Brady
Councillor Garvey
Councillor Hall
Councillor Harper
Councillor Hart
Councillor Hawley
Councillor Jackson
Councillor McLoughlin
Councillor Perkin
Councillor Rogers
Councillor Rushton
Councillor Salt
Councillor Sheldon
Councillor Smith
Councillor Swift
Councillor Yates

Also, in attendance County Councillor Flunder

33.19 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.

Standing item (for discussion as necessary) - Policing in Biddulph

Nothing to report

Standing item- County Council issues

County Councillor Flunder reported that the future of residential care for young people would be discussed at the meeting of the cabinet the following day. Councillor Salt thanked Councillor Flunder for responding; families were concerned about funding after July 2020. Councillor Flunder noted that he would continue to inform this Council.

The Chief Officer left the room before the following discussion.

Councillor Flunder reported that he had worked with Philip White to resolve the school bus situation. There would be a meeting on 16 October 2019 at 4.30 which may lead to an extension of the current arrangements. Everyone agreed that the situation was ridiculous, but the legal department did not want to leave itself open to having a case against it. Councillor Flunder would confirm the exact location of the meeting.

The Chief Officer returned to the room.

Councillor Flunder noted that the information about the Meadows School site would be public at the end of October 2019. Councillor Salt asked if Councillor Flunder could confirm or deny that a land swap had taken place. Councillor Flunder responded that there was no information that such a thing had occurred; the map may not be as accurate as Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (SMDC) believed. Councillor Rogers reported that there were many rumours flying around the town. Councillor Jackson noted that if Councillor Flunder was correct, there was some conflict between the maps at SMDC and what the County Council understood was going forwards. He had wasted two hours checking the maps and the site; he continued that decisions were made about our town above our heads when there was supposed to be a partnership. Councillor Flunder replied that he tried to promote inclusivity. Councillor Davies asked if there was a sale or agreement to sell in place. Councillor Flunder noted that he would say when he could.

Councillor Flunder had arranged to meet Antony Capostagno about the use of the Youth and Community Zone. He had brokered a meeting at the County Council where an offer of a 25-year lease had been increased to 75 years; he noted that the option to buy had not been ruled out. Councillor Salt was a board member at the Zone and thanked Councillor Flunder for sorting this out, which meant that additional funding could be sought. She thanked Councillor Flunder for his support

Councillor Flunder thanked the two Town Councillors who had given a presentation at the recent Parish Assembly, it 'went down well'.

Councillor Flunder noted that another round of DHP funding was available for applications online, up to the first or second weeks of December 2019.

Councillor Flunder (in his business capacity) had been approached to provide laser lights at the Christmas lights switch-on and for the VE/VJ Celebrations. Councillor Flunder would provide a free demonstration at the Town Hall 23/4 October 2019 – 'Purple for Polio' Day, giving members the opportunity to see the lights in action.

34. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence and reasons accepted were received from:

Councillor Baddeley
Councillor Redfern

35. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests & Dispensations: Minute 33b The Chief Officer. Councillor Sheldon in anything pertaining to Biddulph in Bloom. Minute 39: Councillor Hart and Councillor Sheldon- site specifics in Biddulph. Minute 41 Councillor Davies- his invoice

To declare any Other Disclosable Interests: Councillor Hall was a member of Biddulph Rotary.

36. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Town Council held on 10 September 2019 were **approved and signed** the Minutes of the meeting the Town Council held on 9 July 2019.

The Minutes of the meeting of the Finance, Strategy and Management Committee held on 24 September 2019 were **approved and signed**.

The Minutes of the Recreation and Amenities Committee meeting held on 10 September 2019 were **received**. Members in attendance was amended.

The Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 17 September 2019 were **received**.

The Minutes of the Town and Community Committee meeting held on 17 September 2019 were **received**.

Minute 43, Councillor Jackson queried whether there had been 50 enquiries or whether 50 individual bricks had been requested for the memorial; the Chief Officer confirmed that this was bricks. Councillor Jackson did not necessarily think it was a good idea to have a memorial for people who had lost their lives in the mines. If this is not accurate or individuals died after with lung disease or similar, this could mean they are not recognised. Councillor McLoughlin noted that a list had been compiled but was aware that some might be missing. Councillor Jackson thought a decision had been made previously not to go down that route.

Councillor Davies reminded members that this time was to verify the accuracy of the minutes. Discussion should be as an agenda item or referred to the next meeting of the Town and Community Committee.

Minute 46, Councillor Jackson pointed out two typing errors.

37. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

Councillor Davies thanked all who had helped to make the Classic Car Show a success, including the knowledge and expertise of Councillor Rogers. He also thanked those who had helped with the Music and Beer Festival especially the 'Up In Arms' group, Councillor Rogers who stood on the door and all who had sponsored a beer barrel. The bar staff had served 800 pints and other drinks; the Mayor thanked those who had drunk the beer too!

Councillor Davies noted that the musicians had also played for a reduced rate; the event had raised £1800 for the Mayors Charities. Councillor Rogers noted that Snelsons had advertised the Classic Car Show on Facebook and received 24,500 hits.

Councillor Davies thanked Councillor Smith for organising the Ethical Fair; another way to make Biddulph 'a destination'.

Councillor Davies reminded members about the Antarctic Adventure event on Saturday 12 October at 7.00pm, the sponsored swimathon on 19 October and the Biddulph Male Voice Choir Concert on 26 October.

38. A REPORT ON THE LEEK HOSPITAL WORKING GROUP- CLLR SALT

Councillor Salt had been appointed as the Biddulph representative on the Leek Town Council Health Working Group. Councillor Salt is also a member of the Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (SMDC) Health Scrutiny Committee.

No decisions had been taken, but beds had been removed and it appeared that they would not be back. At the District Council scrutiny committee, members had passed a vote of no confidence in the Leadership of the CCG and against the merger.

Councillor Harper thanked Councillor Salt for her work; it was vital that this Council was kept informed.

Councillor Hart asked which meetings Councillor Salt had attended and if she had missed any. Councillor Salt asked for clarification. Councillor Hart asked if Councillor Salt had missed any meetings of the hospital working group, Councillor Salt confirmed that she had not.

Councillors Hart and Sheldon left the room before discussion on the following item.

39. ITEM REQUESTED BY COUNCILLOR DAVIES

Local Plan: Object through the current Staffordshire Moorlands District Council consultation to the 'safeguarding' of sites BD062, BD068 and BD087 as safeguarded sites and their removal from the 'green belt'.

Consideration of the response from the Town Council.

Councillor Davies noted that United Utilities had objected to the sites. At BD087 there was evidence of flooding in the Neighbourhood Plan; SMDC had not involved the Environment Agency in the Local Plan. The three sites were in the middle of a strategic wildlife corridor and fragment the habitats. Access to BD087 was at the bottom of March Green Road, a designated flood plan. Egress to the A527 was difficult as it was uphill. The other sites were worse in every way from BDNEW, which had been removed. Councillor Davies wanted to make an objection with the formal backing of the Town Council.

Councillor Hawley concurred, at the July meeting of the Town Council the decision had been to wait for a response from Mr D Larner (SMDC) to the letter sent from Ms Hannah Barter (Urban Vision); the response was still awaited.

Councillor Yates felt it was difficult to comment and we need help to ensure our evidence gets to the Inspector; there would be an expense for Hannah to help. The Chief Officer noted that this would be one day's work, costing £500; Hannah knows the area very well already.

Councillor Yates read out his question to and the answer from Mr Larner, which said that SMDC Officers had engaged with the Town Council Neighbourhood Plan team; Councillor Yates felt that the answer was not helpful.

Councillor Hawley noted that evidence had been sent to them in the past, they had not attended meetings and we had arranged to meet with them.

Councillor Jones felt that SMDC had not been listening; it was obvious that they had taken the easy option. Councillor Jones supported Councillor Davies' motion and supported Councillor Hawley in employing Ms Barter for one day.

Councillor Hall seconded the proposal. Councillor Jackson asked if United Utilities did withdraw its objections. He noted that BDNEW had been taken out of Plan by a local campaign of 1000 signatures and by the Inspector.

Councillor Jackson asked if the three sites were removed, where would the numbers come from, adding that if this Council voted for this proposal it would be putting the problem into a different ward and would have to go back to square one; Councillor Jackson was not clear what the next step should be.

Councillor Salt added that if these sites were removed, no other Green Belt sites should be utilised in the town. She expressed disappointment with the South Ward Councillors for not doing similar work for the proposed site at Victoria Row, which was in the Green Belt and would like to adjust the motion to include this.

Councillor Perkin noted that this Council would have a dereliction in duty not to support Councillor Davies' proposal; all information must be sent, these areas are local green spaces in the Neighbourhood Plan. We must submit all the information for all the sites; they must all be taken into consideration.

Councillor Salt made a point of clarification: we as a Town Council were giving more emphasis to the North Ward; this should be for all the sites in Biddulph.

Councillor Rogers noted that Marsh Green Road was flooded this time of the year on most days.

Councillor Yates noted that United Utilities had removed their objections to development because they may need to use the sites themselves. There is now increased housing density on the Wharf Road and Tunstall Road sites; BDNEW was removed by the Government Inspector and cannot be reinstated. Councillor Yates had total confidence in the accuracy of the information in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Councillor Yates noted a number of other sites that could be considered for safeguarding.

Councillor Brady noted that the Mayor is 'sticking up' for his Ward.

Councillor Barlow stated that he had attended a meeting with Victoria Row residents and supported them; he gave information about his contact details, but no one had been in contact with him.

Councillor Jones felt that the Mayor was sticking up for Biddulph, not just his Ward. The easy options are the wrong ones.

Councillor Brady responded that, if all of Biddulph was important, all sites should be included.

Councillor McLoughlin stated that no one thinks the Local Plan is suitable for this town. The Town Council needs independent advice about how to respond during this 6-week consultation period on the Main Modifications; all issues should be considered. Councillor McLoughlin was concerned that party politics was getting in the way.

Councillor McLoughlin identified a number of significant concerns:

- a) The Tunstall Road masterplan process was flawed.
- b) There has been no consultation process for the Wharf Road masterplan
- c) The Local Green Space Designations are to be removed on Dorset Drive East and West
- d) The North Ward sites are not appropriate for development.

Councillor Salt wished to amend the motion to include all potential safeguarded sites and Victoria Row. Councillor Salt had wanted Councillor Barlow to ask that Victoria Row was included.

Councillor Davies read out the proposed new motion:

Local Plan: Object through the current Staffordshire Moorlands District Council consultation to the 'safeguarding' of sites BD062, BD068 and BD087 and all potential sites as safeguarded sites and their removal from the 'green belt'. In addition, objections will be raised in relation to the current development proposals for Victoria Row and the removal of Local Green Space Designations at Dorset Drive.

Hannah Barter would consider all the Main Modifications proposed in relation to Biddulph.

The new motion was seconded by Councillor Jones.

There was a vote: 14 in favour; 3 against.

The figure associated with Hannah Barter's involvement had not been included on the agenda. Councillor Jackson felt that Standing Orders should be suspended to enable Councillors to confirm this amount; Councillor Davies agreed. There was a vote and Standing Orders were suspended.

The Mayor proposed asking Hannah Barter to complete a response on behalf of the Town Council, at a cost of £500; seconded by Councillor Harper and agreed.

Standing Orders were reinstated.

Councillors Hart and Sheldon returned to the meeting.

40. VERBAL UPDATE ON MANAGEMENT OF BIDDULPH TOWN HALL AND VISITOR CENTRE (STANDING AGENDA ITEM)

The Chief Officer noted that a report had been considered by the District Council Cabinet.

Councillor Hall confirmed that this had been accepted by the Cabinet; this would form the basis of consultation between the District Council and Town Council. He was hopeful for a satisfactory conclusion.

Councillor Salt wondered whether the information in this report could be sent to Town Councillors. The Chief Officer thought it could.

41. ACCOUNTS & FINANC

a) Accounts received for payment in October 2019

Expenditure under £500

Ash Waste Services (Town Burial Ground)	£395.22
Tidysite (Woodhouse Burial Ground)	£ 23.10
Market imprest: For stall construction and dismantling	£180.00
Brian Carter: Un/lock gates at Woodhouse Burial Ground	£ 40.00

Grenke – photocopier lease	£439.67
Staffordshire Moorlands District Council – Lease of lands at Congleton Road	£ 90.00
Business Products	£222.36
Copy charges September	
J Davies	£ 75.00
Cake for Neighbourhood Plan consultation	
Zurich Municipal	£ 90.00
Insurance for event	
Supplementary account	
Expenditure above £5004	
D & G Bus Ltd	£3229.80
93 bus service for September	
Heads (Congleton) Ltd	£ 576.00
What's on advertisement – 16 events	
RP Gibson	£1300.00
Storage for market equipment – 6 months	
Salaries	£5343.31
HMRC to be paid 30 September 2019	£1979.02
Staffs Pension Fund	£2207.11
R Standell	£7100.00
Second half burial grounds maintenance	
Lengthsman, market and classic car show	£ 900.00
Down to Earth Designs	£13534.02
2 nd instalment work at Station Road site	
Bp Architecture	£ 600.00
Work for Overton Road trough reinstatement	

Expenditure below £500

A J Environmental £300.00
Annual contract Woodhouse Burial Ground

Countrywide Grounds Maintenance £ 58.50
Springfield Road maintenance October 2019

J Gaunt £78.50
Reimburse items purchased

Petty cash £26.35
September 2019

Severn Trent Ltd £137.88
Water connection to Station Road

Credit Car

Credit Card to be paid October
Facebook £ 8.64
Advertising – 5 events

Shutterstock £19.00
Media graphics monthly fee

Giff gaff £25.00
Wifi charges

The meeting closed at 7.25 pm

Signed Date