

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BIDDULPH TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 8 SEPTEMBER 2020.

The Mayor welcomed members to the Zoom meeting and read a statement to assist those that were viewing the meeting via Facebook.

PRESENT

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

PCSO Pete Johnson (Staffordshire Police) and Councillor Keith Flunder (Staffordshire County Council) were also in attendance.

No attendees wished their names to be excluded from the minutes.

16. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

To receive verbal or written representations from:

- Staffordshire Police

PCSO Pete Johnson updated Councillors about Operation Lightning that had proved to be successful in dealing with road safety, particularly in the Biddulph

Moor area. There had been a theft in a rural location and the Police were working proactively with Your Housing in relation to a number of addresses in the town.

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) is down 3% in the year to date. There has, however, been an increase in the number of neighbour disputes. Crime, as a whole, is down in the last 12-months.

There has been an increase in 'stop and search'. The Police have also put out information in the *Biddulph Times* about parking guidance.

There had been an issue at Willocks Wood on Congleton Edge Road. Strava (website for tracking exercise) advertises that this is a good ride; the Police are looking to get this removed.

There had also been some trespassers at the Biddulph Grange Gardens; the Police are working with the National Trust in relation to this.

Councillor Hart advised about the proposed roadworks on the A527, which may force traffic onto minor roads in Gillow Heath and Biddulph Park.

There was some discussion about bikes/ quads during the day. PCSO Johnson would look into this.

- Staffordshire County Council representative(s)

Councillor Flunder noted that he had been sending information to the Chief Officer with updates about County Council activity; this had been forwarded to Councillors.

Councillor Flunder was trying to resolve the issue in relation to the Conway Road tree that had been felled; he thanked Councillor Sheldon for her suggestions.

The pavements were being re-surfaced on Park Lane; Colwyn Drive was the next consideration. Councillor Flunder had completed a recent DHP meeting, to consider his Highways priorities.

Councillor Flunder also noted that access to blue badges and disabled parking spaces is a current issue that he is looking into.

'Do It Staffordshire' are signing up new volunteers; there is also free training for volunteers at Buxton and Leek college.

Councillor Flunder noted a number of health promotions; the information had been sent to Councillors.

Councillor Yates queried the continuous flooding by the steel factory. Councillor Flunder was pushing for a survey.

Councillor Smith queried the current Covid-19 testing facilities. Councillor Flunder believed the intention was to increase testing facilities; he would continue to pursue this.

Councillor Jones thanked Councillor Flunder for his work.

The Mayor to confirm that attendees will be named in the Minutes, unless otherwise instructed.

17. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillor Adams.

18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- a) To declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests & Dispensations:
Councillor Rogers noted that a payment was due to be approved to his place of work.
- b) To declare any Other Disclosable Interests: None.

MINUTES

- a) The Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 14 July 2020 were approved. (Minutes to be signed when restrictions on social distancing have been relaxed). Councillor Harper had been present at the meeting.
- b) The Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 21 July 2020 were received. Councillor Harper wished to disassociate himself from the 'inflammatory' comment that had been made by the speaker from James Bateman Middle School.

- c) The Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 25 August 2020 were received.

18. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

Councillor Jones noted that the Civic chain was at the jewellers being enhanced.

Councillor Jones had requested that the Chief Officer circulate the findings from the car park survey, which had taken place throughout August. Councillor Jones read this, for the benefit of the public that were viewing the meeting. Councillor Jones' note stated:

Introduction

As part of an effort to ascertain the footfall and street parking impact of the removal of short term car parking charges from the Wharf Road car park in Biddulph on August 1st 2020, the Mayor, with the assistance of two other Biddulph Town Councillors, undertook to take a snapshot of the town at approx 12:00hrs on each working day (Mon –Sat). This commenced on Friday July 17th two weeks before the charges were removed, and ended on Saturday 29th August four weeks afterwards.

Method

Photographs were taken each day at the following locations: -

- *High Street North and South from the corner of South View and High Street*
- *South View from the High Street*
- *King Street from the High Street*
- *John Street North and South from the corner of John Street and Gunn Street*
- *Gunn Street from John Street*
- *Several shots covering the entirety of Wharf Road Car Park.*

These photographs were then examined and, along with the approx number of cars on the Wharf Road Car Park, the number of parked cars and pedestrians visible in the town were noted. The information was then collated and used to produce a graphical indication of any changes.

Please Note:

The data produced is from "snapshots"; it is very small sample intended only to be used a guide, and the numbers in some instances are estimates due to the

quality of the images. However, these parameters apply equally to both before and after the charges were removed and on the strength of current evidence, whilst there is no doubt that the Wharf Road Car Park has seen an increase in parked cars, there has been no indication that there has been any change to the footfall in the central areas of the town.

Further investigation is though, highly recommended before any future policy is implemented.

Councillor Jones noted that there seemed to be an increase in parking on the Wharf Road car park, but there was no indication that footfall had increased. Councillor Jones recommended further work.

Councillor Rogers noted that a street photo doesn't show what is happening in the shops. Wains (Councillor Rogers' place of work) was definitely busier. Councillor Rogers felt a Chamber of Trade was needed.

Councillor Yates felt that, if this exercise was completed again, there should be enhanced clarification about the need to show a ticket. This had not been dealt with well by the media. Councillor Yates wondered whether there was less street parking. Councillor Jones noted that there had been no significant change.

Councillor Jones noted that the Classic Car event had been postponed. This was very sad, but necessary, given the current situation.

19. STANDING ITEM- COVID RESPONSE UPDATE

The Chief Officer noted that there were no new developments to report, but this is an opportunity for Councillors to raise or identify any issues.

Councillor Salt queried whether grant funding had been paid to Sukis for meals provided. The Chief Officer noted that this had not been received from Staffordshire Moorlands District Council; she had chased this.

20. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE MANAGEMENT OF BIDDULPH TOWN HALL

The Chief Officer wished to formally minute that the Town Council, after three years or work, had now signed a 25-year lease for the management of the

Town Hall (effective 10 August). This also involved the TUPE of the three caretaking staff; she was very pleased to have them as part of the team. There were also a lot of compliance requirements that was being considered at the moment.

The Chief Officer wished to open the building to the public; this had not been re-opened by the District Council. Staff were working hard to ensure that the environment was safe for visitors.

Councillor Jones wished to thank the Chief Officer for her hard work on this project.

21. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE BIDDULPH GRANGE COUNTRY PARK VISITOR CENTRE LEASE

Councillor Jones also thanked the Chief Officer for her work on this. The lease had now been signed (effective 29 August). Councillor Jones hoped the work could be done to enable the building to be open in the Spring.

Councillor Yates queried the length of the lease. A longer lease might make it easier to get grants for renewables. Could the Town Council now negotiate a longer lease? Councillor Jones wished to extend the lease.

Councillor Garvey wished to thank the Mayor for his hard work on this project.

22. TO APPROVE THE NALC SALARY SCALES (ATTACHED) AND BACKDATED PAY

Councillor Rogers noted that this had also been discussed at the SPCA meeting, attended by himself and Councillor Hawley.

The salary scales were approved.

23. TO APPROVE THE APPOINTMENT OF TWO CUSTOMER SUPPORT ASSISTANTS AND TO NOTE THAT THE FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION OFFICER POST HAS BEEN RE-ADVERTISED

Councillor Jackson queried whether the candidates could be named; the Chief Officer noted she was awaiting one reference.

The Chief Officer noted that the candidates were happy to work Monday/ Tuesday/ Wednesday and Wednesday/ Thursday Friday.

The Chief Officer confirmed that the closing date for the Finance and Administration Officer role was 18 September 2020; she encouraged Councillors and those watching the meeting to consider the role and tell people about it. These were exciting times!

24. TO NOTE THAT WIFI HAS NOW BEEN INSTALLED IN THE TOWN HALL

Councillor Jones noted that this was 'another landmark'.

The Chief Officer had invoiced the District Council for the installation, and reminded Councillors that the Town Council would be responsible for the ongoing costs.

25. TO APPROVE A DISPENSATION FOR COUNCILLOR ADAMS, DUE TO ILL HEALTH

Councillor Jones had spoken to Councillor Adams; he was still not well. Councillor Jones proposed a six-month dispensation in relation to the attendance at meetings. Seconded by Councillor Hart; approved.

26. ACCOUNTS & FINANCE

- a) To expenditure below paid in **AUGUST**; this is in addition to those items that were included within the July 2020 Town Council meeting.

Expenditure above £5000

None

Expenditure above £500 and below £5000

D&G Bus	3537.40
Provision of the 93 service (confirmed figure)	

R. Standell
Lengthsman duties 1080

Expenditure below £500

SLCC item approved in July was £391 not £363

Ash Waste item approved in July was £364.02 not £358.74

Fifteen item approved in July was £259.20 not £57.67 (paid by Direct Debit) The larger cost included WIFI connection.

Petty Cash 53.29

M. Peers
Park Lane allotment repairs 52.89

Aaron Locksmiths
Town Council Office, third floor 136.00

Silvermaze
Final amendments to map 54.00

Alan Richardson
Plumbing items 45.15

Jodie Hancock
Plumbing items 114.99

Minster Carpets
Office suite 846.00

Business Products 18.58

SLCC webinars 180.00

S.Haydon 15.22
Solicitors expenses (mileage and 'swearing')

b) To approve **SEPTEMBER** expenditure.

Expenditure above £5000

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council

Rates- Biddulph Town Hall 15,595.46

Expenditure above £500 and below £5000

Moorlec Electrical Services Ltd

Electrical Works in Town Council office space 2347.69

Fifteen Group

Installation of WIFI (to be reimbursed by SMDC) 2385.60

Re-issue of cheque to Minster Mills

Flooring in Town Council office suite 828.00

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council

Rates- Public Conveniences 1279.63

Expenditure below £500

EBM

Market labels 51.60

Tidysite

Woodhouse Burial Ground bins 23.10

SLCC

Webinars/ Training sessions 162.00

Business Products

Copies 9.36

FW and D Wain

Dishwasher 239.99

Ash Waste	
Town Burial Ground bins	445.80
Parish Online	
Annual subscription	336.00
Waterplus	
Water at Woodhouse Burial Ground	24.69
Alan Richardson	
Paint	35.00
Brian Carter	
Expenses at Woodhouse Burial Ground	40.00
Expenses at Public Conveniences	60.00
Waterplus	
Water at Town Burial Ground	20.17
Moorside Memorials	
Maintenance of benches	475.00
Artisan Market	
Stall erector expenses	180.00
Sarah Haydon	
Hooks and phone cover	10.02
Credit Card	
Facebook promotion	8.00
Office furniture	550.80
Post Office- stamp	45.23
Giff Gaff (wifi)	15.00
Shutterstock (artwork)	19.00

c) To approve **Supplementary Accounts**, received after the agenda has been published.

Petty Cash	59.44
D&G Bus (93 Bus)	3076
Countrywide Ground Maintenance (Springfield Road grass cutting)	61.40
Reimbursement to Cllr Smith (Zero Carbon Britain training session)	75.00
Moorlands Contract Cleaning (Bus Hub toilets and Visitor Centre toilets)	1239.66
Raymond Gibson (storage provision)	1300
Salaries:	
August Caretaker salaries	2620
Please note: when P45 forms were received from Derbyshire County Council, figures were confirmed and too much had been paid. This will be re-paid by the caretakers.	
Pension contributions (September)	2186.77
Please note: caretakers' pensions to be adjusted when new pension arrangements are established.	
September salaries (all staff)	8851
HMRC (August caretaker contributions and all staff September contributions)	3778.02
AJ Environmental - mole contract	300
Howdens (bathroom in TC office suite)	617.66
Zurich Insurance- Town Hall and Visitor Centre	997.61
BP Architects (Station Road map)	60

Councillor Davies queried whether the public conveniences was both sets of toilets; the Chief Officer confirmed that this was just the bus hub toilets. There were covenants around the old block.

27. CONFIDENTIAL

In accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, s1, the Council is to determine which items, if any, should be taken with the public excluded.

TO RECEIVE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE IT NETWORK REQUIREMENTS AND TO APPROVE A REVISED QUOTATION FOR THE WORKS

A decision was taken to work with a preferred provider in relation to the provision of IT.

The meeting closed at 7.12pm.

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