

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE TOWN AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 19 NOVEMBER 2019

PRESENT

- The Mayor - Councillor Davies
- The Deputy Mayor – Councillor Jones
- Councillor Barlow
- Councillor Brady
- Councillor McLoughlin
- Councillor Perkin
- Councillor Rogers
- Councillor Rushton
- Councillor Smith
- Councillor Yates

Also in attendance

- Councillor Harper
- Councillor Hart
- Councillor Hawley

60. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from

- Councillor Baddeley
- Councillor Redfern
- Councillor Sheldon
- Councillor Swift

61. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- i. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests & Dispensations: Councillor Hart was Deputy Chair of the Moorlands Partnership Board. Councillor Harper had several grandchildren who attended Biddulph schools.
- ii. Other Interests: None.

62. MINUTES

- a. The Minutes of the Town and Community Committee meeting held on Tuesday 15 October 2019 were **signed** as an accurate record.

- b. The Notes from the meeting of the Christmas Lights Working Group meeting held on 10 October 2019 were **received**.
- c. The Notes from the Christmas Lights Working Group meeting held on 5 November 2019 were **received**.

63. STATION ROAD UPDATE (STANDING AGENDA ITEM)

The Chief Officer read a report from Beverley Poole (BP Architects), which read:

1. *The works on site are virtually complete as far as they can go.*
2. *Turfing is circa 98% there is one half bay of turf to go down and then the edging to cut which will be done tomorrow.*
3. *Planting is all in.*
4. *Roof to the incoming services unit is complete. Rather than a pitched roof next door have agreed formation of a timber planting area over the top which will be planted up in the summer so plants can trail down.*
5. *Contractor will be pointing all the sets tomorrow.*
6. *They have a bowser on site tomorrow to clean all the paving down.*
7. *There are a couple of lights being fitted in the middle circle 5 tomorrow, so the last couple of slabs here will then be laid.*
8. *There are four lights to go in Circle 4 relating to the Memorial which will be held until the memorial goes in or base is built up.*
9. *I asked them to fill this circle with soil for now – which is done so that this area is safe.*
10. *The water pipe from our incoming cabinet to the pavement edge is in and coiled up at the perimeter waiting for the water connection by Severn Trent.*
11. *The Tarmac paving's coming into the Circles are done.*
12. *By close of play tomorrow, Contractor is aiming to be complete as far as he can go.*
13. *What I have agreed with him is that he will leave a small area of fencing around the water connection point, but all the rest of the fencing can be taken away for now as the centre of Circle 4 is safe. Then people can start to walk through the garden area.*
14. *As soon as we are ready to proceed with the Memorial then a small area of fence can be re-erected.*

Items that need to be done and chased:

- 1. Severn Trent incoming Connection – needs to be in before fountains can be properly commissioned.*
- 2. Power Supply Isolation Switch and Meter- as soon as this is in Contractor will be able to commission the fountains and apply first pipe treatment.*
- 3. Memorial.*

We were going to do a Newspaper Article to let people know.

I have said to Contractor that once I know they are all cleaned up I will go back with the Camera and take some Architectural Shots.

Then we can do a bit of an Article and a photo for the paper to let everyone know that everything is 95% complete and can be used whilst the final items are being sorted.

Councillor Davies noted that the architect and builder had worked with Councillor Sheldon to deter persons from climbing onto the control box to gain access to the rear of the adjacent shop, additional planting had been carried out and amendments made to the top of the box.

Councillor Rogers asked if there would be an official opening of the site; the Chief Officer responded that there would, but this was a little way off yet, possibly Spring 2020. The Chief Officer noted that there had been a lot of interest in the memorial bricks.

Councillor Davies noted that thought should be given to an official name for the area.

64. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE FIRST ETHICAL FAIR AND TO CONSIDER PLANS FOR 2020

Councillor Smith reported that the event had been well attended with positive feedback, especially from out of the area. All stallholders wanted to come again. There was a possibility of holding a twilight fair merging into the evening.

The Chief Officer asked if Councillor Smith was seeking the support of the Town Council again going forwards. Councillor Smith responded that she

was, it was hoped to hold another fair during the last week in February 2020 to tie in with Fairtrade fortnight.

Councillor Yates wholeheartedly supported the positive event; it fitted in with the climate change and environment initiatives, being promotional and educational, it was the perfect type of event.

Councillor Rogers thought the event was well organised, well attended and 'well done'.

The Chief Officer asked if this Council would offer funding.

Councillor McLoughlin proposed that this Council supported the event financially.

Councillor Smith would like to hold the event seasonally i.e. four times per year, she felt there was enough interest.

Councillor Jones noted that holding the event four times in a year would not be a lot of money, £500 should cover all four meetings; he felt that this Council should support the initiative financially.

Councillor Hart wondered if this could be added to the District Council market funding support.

Councillor Yates supported Councillor Hart.

Councillor Davies noted that the Ethical Fair had brought people into Biddulph as did the Classic Car Show in the summer; he wholeheartedly supported future Ethical Fairs and Classic Car Shows too.

Councillor Harper thought consideration should be given to a Christmas Fair too, he was in favour of this Council giving financial support to the Ethical Fair.

It was proposed by Councillor Smith and seconded by Councillor Yates to support an Ethical Fair; a vote was taken, and this was agreed.

65. YOUNG PEOPLE:

The Chief Officer reported that we had recently hosted two meetings for two different school groups.

- a) To receive an update on Community Council meetings (Woodhouse and James Bateman Middle Schools) and to consider possible funding of £200.*

Representatives from James Bateman Middle School and Woodhouse Academy had been meeting to discuss various matters including perception of young people to others, their wants, needs and how to provide them. This meeting had started as a result of the Young People's Working Group. It was proposed by Councillor Jones and seconded by Councillor Rushton to provide a small budget that could be made available if needed. A vote was taken and this was agreed.

Councillor Rogers noted that the small Christmas Trees had arrived and were being delivered to the shops where people had responded favourably to the letters which had been delivered by Councillor Rushton

Councillor McLoughlin thanked Councillors Rogers and Rushton.

Councillor Harper asked where the trees would be in the shops, Councillor Rushton responded that some would be in brackets where fitted on the side of shops and some in pots for display inside.

- b) To receive an update on the School Learners' Forum meetings.*

The Chief Officer reported that the Forum included 2 representatives from all the first and middle schools in the town, and usually the different years at the High School.

Members of the Forum were given a guided tour of the Town Hall.

The young people raised issues which concerned them including dog poo, fear of teenagers on the street and enhanced play areas, especially Church Road.

The Chief Officer told the Forum about the Town Councils current projects e.g. Biddulph Grange Country Park Visitor Centre and VE Day.

PCSO Linton had also attended the meeting and raised a few points for them to consider e.g. safety when defrosting cars.

Councillor Smith had visited Church Road with Councillor Jackson and spoken to representatives of the District Council. The Zip Line was to be replaced and the whole area reassessed.

66. TO APPROVE THAT A GRANT APPLICATION IS MADE FOR 'POCKET PARKS' (INTRODUCTION ATTACHED, FURTHER INFORMATION AVAILABLE AT:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pocket-parks-helping-communities-transform-unloved-neglected-or-derelict-areas-into-new-green-spaces?fbclid=IwAR0TQCaOpLbzS4PO8EZA601P49Je8eCE_E3OPwJNVDIHdoQL1OLqOujHPk)

The Chief Officer reported that government funding was available, but applications must be made by 31 December 2019.

Councillor Yates gave a short presentation showing 3 prospective areas in the West Ward, which were all currently owned by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (SMDC). They were small plots the size of a tennis court which could be reclaimed and enhanced with the addition of seating, fruit and nut trees.

The Chief Officer noted that the application would need to have a supporting letter from the District Council.

Councillor Barlow asked how many pocket parks one town could have.

Councillor Davies wondered if the area at St John's Road could be integrated.

Councillor Hawley noted that 70+ Local Green Spaces had been identified in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Councillor Jones added that he could think of three possible sites, but Councillor Yates had already identified and prepared plans so this Council should support him and do it.

Councillor Yates felt this would be semi-experimental and could be used as a case study.

Councillor Harper suggested Kingsfield Crescent and Castle View as prospective sites.

Councillor Smith supported Councillor Yates; this could be used as a blueprint and case study so if any other funding became available the idea could be used on a different site.

Councillor Hart liked 'spade ready' projects, which could be put together very quickly and proposed that the Craigside to Dorset Drive area is put forwards.

Councillor Jones concurred with Councillor Hart, noting that time was short.

Councillor Yates noted that of the three sites he had suggested, he preferred Dorset Drive as it was currently 'broken'. Work needed there included:

- Raising the footpath.
- Improved drainage.
- Installing a seat.
- Planting fruit and nut trees on the bankside.
- Forming a wetland area.
- Planting bulrushes and willow trees.

The area was owned by the District Council and monitored by the Environment Agency and could be enhanced at a later date.

Councillor Yates proposed that this Council applies for a grant for the land at Dorset Drive East, this was seconded by Councillor Smith a vote was taken and agreed.

67. TO APPROVE THAT RESTORATION WORK IS COMPLETED ON THE BIDDULPH CENOTAPH

Councillor Jones expressed concern about the statue and queried if it was leaning.

The Chief Officer noted that a restoration project would be commissioned which could be completed before May 2020; the company would also be asked to check the stability of the soldier.

This was proposed by Councillor Jones, seconded by Councillor Rushton, a vote was taken and agreed.

68. TO CONSIDER ONGOING RESTORATION PROJECTS IN BIDDULPH AND APPROVAL OF:

a) BENCH AT GILLOW HEATH STATION

The Chief Officer reported that £640 had been awarded by Moorlands Partnership Board (MPB) towards the installation of 2 benches at the site. It was no longer possible to source an original North Staffordshire Railway bench. The Chief Officer had spoken with the Biddulph and District Genealogical and Historical Society to consider a company which provided new benches in the old style.

The whole project included:

- to move the fence back.
- install two benches.
- restore the platform edge setts.
- install interpretation panels.
- install finger posts directing to the town centre.
- restore the bridge.

Councillor Hart noted that this was a community inspired project, the main problems were moving the fence and obtaining replacement bricks for the platform. He noted that someone was willing to donate funds for one of the benches.

Councillor Jones moved that if the replacement bench looked right, we should do it.

The Chief Officer would have discussions with MPB about the new benches.

Councillor Yates asked where the benches would be located. There had been incidents of anti-social behaviour at the car park which now had a night time barrier.

The Chief Officer responded that the project was to reinstate the platform, the benches would be positioned to look as if a train may come.

Councillor Rogers noted that care should be taken for the privacy of the people who lived in the old station house.

Councillor Hart noted that they were fully aware of the project.

It was proposed by Councillor Perkin and seconded by Councillor Jones to go ahead with the project with the new benches.

b) NOTICEBOARD AT HALLS ROAD RECREATION GROUND

The Chief Officer would apply for a Moorlands Partnership Board grant towards the purchase of a noticeboard, to raise awareness of community events and to display the new Biddulph heritage map. The specification would match the existing board in the town and would cost in the region of £1200.

Councillor Hart thought this was ideal opportunity to promote Biddulph and Biddulph events and was approved by the local community.

It was proposed by Councillor Davies and seconded by Councillor Yates to apply for the grant, a vote was taken, and it was agreed that the Chief Officer would proceed.

70. UPDATE ON MENTAL HEALTH TRAINING COSTS

The Chief Officer had contacted a few companies to request quotes for training in Mental Health First Aid; information received, with costs would be disseminated to Councillors.

Councillor Hawley expressed reservations that people with mental health problems would contact Councillors who would then need details of the relevant person to contact to direct the person appropriately.

Councillor Harper had given a few figures at the previous meeting, he had grave concerns and serious reservations about the proposal.

Councillor McLoughlin had attended a training session in Stafford for those encountering people with mental health issues in day-to-day work. The training had been provided the HR department at Staffordshire County Council.

Councillor Rogers was attending a meeting of the Staffordshire Parish Councils Association in December and would raise the matter of training providers.

Councillor Jones said a Councillor needed awareness, recognition and a list of phone numbers. He noted that SMDC provided in-house training.

Councillor Smith asked for an outline of what the different courses provided, would it be awareness and signposting?

The Chief Officer would obtain options and costs, she noted that training would not be mandatory; she had been asked to investigate Biddulph becoming a mental health friendly town, so was providing the information.

Councillor Yates would like to support this; he noted that the District Council level one training was on signposting.

Councillor Rogers would like mental health awareness training.

Councillor Hart felt that good common sense was best; it was easy to get out of depth.

Councillor McLoughlin summarised that the Chief Officer would investigate and provide information to members.

71. CONSIDERATION OF PROJECTS FOR 2020-21 TO ASSIST BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS

The Chief Officer gave an overview of items to consider prior to budget setting at the next meeting.

Councillor Yates asked about a climate change pot.

Councillor Hawley felt that we should consider adding inflation to some things e.g. Christmas lights.

Councillor Harper suggested adding funding for pocket gardens in other areas of the town.

Councillor Yates suggested that the Councillor grants scheme is extended to all Councillors.

Councillor Hart noted that the MPB would have funds to award in the next financial year, so applications for potential projects could be made and match funding would be needed.

Councillor Hawley noted that there was £600,000 in the regeneration budget, some funding could be paid from there.

Councillor Smith noted that the Biddulph Grange Country Park visitor centre had not been allocated funding. The Chief Officer responded that there was funding for this in earmarked reserves.

The meeting closed at 7.50 pm

Signed Date