

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE RECREATION AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 11 FEBRUARY 2020

PRESENT

- The Mayor - Councillor Davies
- Councillor Baddeley
- Councillor Barlow
- Councillor Brady
- Councillor Garvey
- Councillor Harper
- Councillor Hart
- Councillor Rogers
- Councillor Sheldon
- Councillor Yates

Other Attendees:

- Councillor Hawley
- Councillor McLoughlin
- Councillor Rushton
- Councillor Smith

49.19 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence and reasons accepted were received from:

- Councillor Hall
- Councillor Jackson

50. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- a) To declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests & Dispensations:
Minute 58 Councillor Jones employed by the West Midlands Ambulance Service.
Councillor Sheldon in anything pertaining to Biddulph in Bloom.
- b) To declare any Other Disclosable Interests: None were declared.

51. MINUTES

The minutes of the Recreation and Amenities Committee meeting held on 14 January 2020 were **approved and signed**.

52. LENGTHSMAN

Standing agenda item - New jobs for the Lengthsman

Councillor Yates asked whether the area at the bottom of Station Road could be cleared; the root balls need to be removed and the ground requires preparation for replanting.

The Chief Officer presented a quotation of £566 for the introduction of a new area of path at the Community Garden on Station Road, from the lengthsman. This was considered; proposed by Councillor Jones, seconded by Councillor Yates and agreed.

BURIAL GROUND ISSUES:

53. TO CONSIDER THE ATTACHED WALKOVER TREE SURVEY FOR THE BURIAL SITES

The Chief Officer reported that N&J Tree Services, who had been contracted to survey the trees at the burial grounds on a three-year contract, had carried out a walkover survey recently. This was as a result of concern that a seemingly healthy lime tree had recently fallen.

The survey had raised a few points for remedial action. The fee for the walkover survey would be deducted by N&J from the fee for the main summer 2020 survey.

54. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE IN RELATION TO COMPLETED DRAINAGE WORK

The Chief Officer reminded Councillors that following several incidents of flooding in their car park, the National Trust at Biddulph Grange had commissioned a survey of the drains and identified that the blockage was adjacent to the boundary with the Town Burial Ground, on Town Council land. The roots of a tree had breached, broken and choked the drain. The tree had been removed, the drain repaired, and the land restored.

Water from the Burial Ground appeared to be draining well, the work had come in as quoted.

Councillor Rogers was pleased that the gates damaged following a traffic accident had been taken away for repair.

FOOTPATHS:

55. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FOLLOWING A MEETING WITH STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL IN RELATION TO FOOTPATH 87

The Chief Officer had visited the site with members of the Biddulph Ramblers, landowners and the Staffordshire County Council Rights of Way Officer. Biddulph Ramblers had a working party and were keen to do work on the footpaths, to help clear the area around the Clough, working with the County Council Rangers. It had taken 12 months for a Rights of Way team member to come and look at the path. It was noted that Staffordshire County Council had reduced the team and posts in the Rights of Way section were being restructured.

It was felt that the restoration of the bridge along this footpath could be done with help from Moorlands Partnership Board and other grant funding.

Councillor Harper noted that the entrance to the path at Fold Lane had been cleared, he wondered if the Lengthsman could help with clearance. The Chief Officer cautioned that this would eat up the annual budget due to the volume of work.

Councillor Davies asked who owned the footpath at the Clough, the Chief Officer responded that it had several owners depending on which side of the water you were walking.

Councillor Harper suggested consideration be given to tapping into the tourism budget for funds. There was consensus that some funding could be provided for improvements in this area.

HIGHWAYS:

56. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE IN RELATION TO HIGHWAYS CONSULTANT PROGRESS

A report had been commissioned in 2018 to advise about the way forward with a number of highways concerns in the town. There was an extensive list of

ideas to take forward, from work on road junctions to speed restrictions to pedestrianisation. The Chief Officer had been trying to draw this to a conclusion. It was hoped that the report would be completed soon.

Councillor Hawley noted that the report would feed into the Neighbourhood Plan and would provide useful help with critical road junctions. He added that all those on the A527 were perceived to be critical junctions.

Councillor McLoughlin had met the consultant and noticed the absence of data from the County Council in relation to the town. Councillor McLoughlin felt that this Council should request more information from the County Council as what we had was not sufficient.

Councillor Yates noted that Biddulph was 'pinched at both ends'. At Chell roundabout and the Tesco Express there were obvious things which Stoke-on-Trent City Council could do to alleviate the problem. Cheshire East Council could do things in Congleton too.

Councillor Yates thought that the A527 was not fit for purpose and that the problems would only get worse when the town grew.

57. TO NOTE THAT LOCAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT PROVIDERS WILL BE ATTENDING A MEETING AT THE TOWN COUNCIL AT THE END OF FEBRUARY AND TO IDENTIFY ANY ISSUES THAT SHOULD BE RAISED

Councillor Rogers asked if this was a meeting for the Bus Working Group. The Chief Officer responded that representatives of the two main providers would be attending and all Councillors were welcome to attend.

The Chief Officer asked if members had any issues with bus stops, routes etc, and was unable to attend, to please pass them to her before the meeting.

58. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE IN RELATION TO AMBULANCE PROVISION IN THE TOWN

Councillor Jones noted that the Rapid Response Vehicle (RRV) had been removed from service in the town the previous week and had been replaced with a dedicated ambulance.

Councillor Jones then left the room before further discussion took place.

The Chief Officer had cause to believe that the RRV had been relocated; two email requests to the West Midlands Ambulance Service for information had, to date, not received a response. Two to three years previously discussion had taken place and assurances given that there was no interest in removing the RRV. When, and if, a response was received, it would be circulated to members.

Councillor Rogers thought the decision disgraceful; lives had been put at risk. He added that a triple 9 call would take at least half an hour for a vehicle to respond if it was based in Stoke, this Council should try and get cover back into our town.

Councillor Yates agreed with Councillor Rogers, adding that Biddulph had an ageing population; he moved that this Council should censure the decision, if a vote was taken it would show our ire.

Councillor McLoughlin noted that Biddulph was a rural area. A recent flurry of snow brought the town to a standstill; if the vehicle was based in Stoke and we had a proper snowstorm, there would be no service in Biddulph. He added that Biddulph needed an ambulance base in the town, removing the RRV was a stupid reckless decision.

Councillor Harper thought it was disgraceful that the Chief Officer had not received a response. The Chief Officer should continue to write noting disappointment at the lack of response. Councillor Harper felt that this community had been encouraged to install defibrillators in the town and felt let down by the Ambulance Service.

Councillor Smith wondered if the Ambulance Service was relying on the Biddulph Moor First Responders to take up the slack.

Councillor Hawley noted that the First Responder service was only available if enough volunteers were on call.

Councillor Garvey was appalled.

Councillor Harper proposed seconded by Councillor Yates that the Chief Officer writes again to the Ambulance Service asking for a response.

Councillor Rogers added that 22 Councillors would be neglecting their position if this Council did not send a letter asap. He was disappointed by the lack of response and the complete removal of the service.

Councillor Harper proposed that a copy of the letter is sent to Anthony Marsh (Chief Executive Officer) to bring the concerns to his attention and that Councillor Davies is the signatory to the letter. Councillor Harper added that Mr Marsh should be invited to come here and explain the position.

Councillor Garvey added that this matter should be raised in as many public arenas as it could be. Mr Marsh should be invited to attend a full meeting of the Town Council.

Councillor Jones returned to the meeting

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.”

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

59. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE IN RELATION TO MORRIS HOMES TREES ADJOINING THE PARK LANE ALLOTMENT SITE

It was agreed to repair damage and plant lost trees at the site.

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm.

Signed Date