

MINUTES OF THE RECREATION AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 14 SEPTEMBER 2021

PRESENT

- Deputy Mayor – Councillor Garvey
- Councillor Baddeley
- Councillor Brady
- Councillor Hall
- Councillor Harper
- Councillor Hart
- Councillor Jones
- Councillor Lawton
- Councillor McLoughlin
- Councillor Redfern
- Councillor Rogers
- Councillor Salt
- Councillor Sheldon
- Councillor Yates

16. APOLOGIES

- Councillor Rushton
- Councillor Hawley
- Councillor Smith

17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- i) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests & Dispensations
- ii) Other Interests

Councillor Sheldon in anything relating to Biddulph in Bloom.

Councillor Hall is a member of the Rotary Club of Biddulph, which is referenced in agenda item 20c.

18. MINUTES

- a) The Minutes of the Recreation and Amenities Committee meeting held on 13 July 2021 were approved and signed.
- b) The Notes from the Transport Working Group meeting held on 13 July 2021 were received.

- c) The Notes from the Transport Working Group meeting held on 7 September 2021 were received.

19. ITEM REQUESTED BY COUNCILLOR GARVEY:

To **consider** the creation of a Town Centre Parking Working Group.

Councillor Garvey noted that he felt focussed activity was needed in relation to on-street parking and District Council controlled parking facilities. There were a number of ideas for improvement, which could regenerate the town centre. One idea was to change parking hours for visitors to the Victoria Centre. Times should reflect the needs of the local businesses. Overnight parking on Wharf Road is an option; more money would be spent in the town.

Councillor Salt applauded the ideas. There is a Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (SMDC) Working Group in relation to parking; there had been some liaison with the Town Council in relation to Wharf Road. Decisions were due to be taken by the SMDC Cabinet, which may not include Biddulph feedback.

Councillor Garvey wanted to provide a local forum and lobby the District Council.

Councillor Salt felt it was too late to influence this work.

Councillor Jones felt this was a laudable aim, but it is too late. SMDC had focussed on Wharf Road; current proposals are 'well down the road'.

Councillor Hart wondered whether on-street suggestions should be discussed with the County Council.

The Chief Officer queried whether feedback from the SMDC Working Group could be shared with the Town Council; there had been no feedback about this. Councillor Hart would provide information to the Chief Officer.

Councillor Yates noted that there were three options that were being discussed by this Working Group.

It was agreed that parking issues could be added to the Transport Working Group agenda, as necessary.

20. BURIAL GROUNDS

- a. To **note** the findings from an agronomist in relation to Section L, which are:

From the gazebo upwards, no matter what turf or grass seed we use, it is not going to grow, particularly outside of summer. There is essentially too little light in that corner to support even the most shade resilient grass.

There are several factors contributing to poor ground condition; close to the oak tree, only the top few mm of soil are absorbing water.

Below this, the soil is dry, this is likely due to the tree roots absorbing water at lower levels and surface tension preventing water percolating freely.

As you move further away from the oak tree, the soil becomes increasingly water logged and boggy, there is no 'hydrophobic' soil in this area. Both the lack of light and dripping from the crown are contributing to the lack of grass and slippery conditions. In addition, the soil gets compacted from use and the weeds growing in the grass are representative of these problems.

Astrotruf does not do well in these conditions as this will soon attract moss.

The recommendations above were noted. It was proposed by Councillor Salt, seconded by Councillor Garvey, to send flowers to the specialist to thank her for her work. Agreed.

There are only two options in relation to improving the ground in Section L:

- Use a ground covering such as bark
- Use geomesh and gravel

- b. To **approve** that the Town Council now writes to grave managers to advise that:

- I. Additional items should be removed from graves (e.g. pots and ornaments).
- II. Willow whips will be planted along the boundary in the Autumn.
- III. The yew tree will be reduced when other tree work is completed in the Autumn.
- IV. Either bark or geomesh may be installed; the Town Council would appreciate their input, which will then enable guidance to be produced in relation to kerbing.

Councillor Yates wondered whether a mixture of bark and gravel may be possible; it was noted that the graves were very close together in this area.

Proposed by Councillor Jones, seconded by Councillor Garvey, to send letters to grave managers. Agreed.

- c. To **note** that the Rotary Club of Biddulph are unable to continue to maintain the Bateman Walk. Consideration will need to be given to this in relation to future maintenance requirements for the site.

Councillor Harper proposed sending a letter of appreciation to the Rotary Club of Biddulph, seconded by Councillor Jones. Agreed.

Further discussion took place about the need to add this area to future budgeting and contracting arrangements.

- d. To **approve** the attached tree survey and to **note** that tenders will now be sought to complete the recommended work.

Proposed by Councillor Salt, seconded by Councillor Yates and agreed.

There was discussion about the emerging Tree Policy, which would need to support planting going forward.

- e. To **receive** a verbal update in relation to the County Council Working Group supported by the Town Council, now called the 'Knypersley Highways Working Group'.

Councillor Redfern provided a background in relation to the starting point for these discussions, which had been the need for replacement wooden posts around the Conway Road Green. Councillor Redfern had been approached by residents; he had, in turn, spoken to Councillor Flunder in relation to Highways concerns.

A meeting had been held, and there was now significant 'mission creep', including additional roads and the local schools. Additional Councillor feedback would be needed from the west ward Councillors.

The Chief Officer confirmed that the Town Council would complete this development work, at a cost of £500. There had needed to be a clear set of

Terms of Reference; the geographical area had expanded during the establishment of the Terms of Reference. There was some merit to the project, but there were likely to be a range of issues. The Chief Officer had confirmed with Highways that they are happy to settle an invoice for £500.

Councillor Harper felt that clear lines were needed.

Councillor Jackson was concerned that there is no money attached to this project for capital improvements.

Councillor Salt felt that, when the survey had gone out, and the results were analysed, this should be the end of the Town Council's involvement. It was then for County to prioritise the work.

The Chief Officer felt it was important to include within the survey, that this is not a Town Council project. In addition, a Biddulph West Councillor should attend the Working Group.

Councillor Garvey felt it was important not to raise expectations and let people down.

It was agreed that the Town Council should exercise caution in relation to this project.

- f. To **confirm** the key locations where dog fouling is an issue so that a targeted media campaign can be commenced with Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (list to follow by email).

The Chief Officer had tabled a list of sites for consideration.

It was agreed that the priorities are:

- Colwyn Drive/Conway Road.
- Park Lane.
- Kingsfield Road.
- Gunn Street.
- Dorset Drive.
- Craigside.
- The footpath from Sandsdown Close, past Washington Close, to Mow Lane.

- Halls Road/Station Road leading from the BVW to Halls Road Playing Fields.
- Biddulph Valley Way from Marsh Green Road to Brown Lees Road.
- John Street.
- Well Street.
- Woodland Street.
- Church Road.
- Springfield Road.
- Lawton Street.
- Duke Street - footpath to Moorland Road.
- Brook Gardens (all sides that surround Halls Road playing fields).
- End of Essex Drive/York Close.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

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.

It was agreed a third quotation with regard to a plinth in the Garden of Remembrance would be provided to the Finance Strategy and Management Committee for their consideration.

The meeting closed at 9.12pm.

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