

MINUTES OF THE TOWN AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 16 FEBRUARY 2021

PRESENT

- The Mayor – Councillor Jones
- Deputy Mayor – Councillor Rushton
- Councillor Baddeley
- Councillor Barlow
- Councillor Brady
- Councillor Davies
- Councillor Jackson
- Councillor McLoughlin
- Councillor Perkin
- Councillor Rogers
- Councillor Salt
- Councillor Sheldon
- Councillor Smith
- Councillor Swift
- Councillor Yates

30.APOLOGIES

None received.

31.DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

a) Disclosable pecuniary interests and dispensations

Councillor Sheldon declared an interest in anything relating to Biddulph in Bloom.

b) Other interests

None declared.

32.MINUTES

The Minutes of the Town and Community meeting 19 January 2021 were approved.

The Minutes of the Environment and Climate Change Working Group held on 4 Feb 2021 were received.

33.STATION ROAD DEVELOPMENT

a) TO CONSIDER REVISED DRAWINGS OF THE MINING MEMORIAL (SENT BY EMAIL)

b) TO AGREE PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND NEXT STEPS

Councillors Perkin said he understood that a decision would be made by the Working Group.

Councillor Jackson said he was happier with this design than previous, though would like to see more height. He also said that the names are to be included, the number of bricks that can fit in to the design would need to be known.

Councillor Jackson said that George Humphries' family had contacted him and stated that they did not want the wheel to be moved. He advised that they should decide when they see the final designs.

Councillor Jones confirmed that the Working Group had come up with a design, and had submitted to the architect. He felt that the new drawings still did not meet the brief, and wanted the plinth to be substantially higher – at least 4-5 feet, to make the wheel more visible and accommodate more bricks.

Councillor McLoughlin noted that the plinth shown was in stone not brick and may not accommodate names. Councillor Jones said that brick had been specified in the brief.

Councillor Yates said that it is surprising the volume of bricks that the plinth could hold.

Councillor Sheldon said she has received a lot of comments that people want the mining wheel to remain in a current position and the family are very unhappy about the prospect of the wheel being moved. Previously the Committee had stated they would consult the family.

Councillor Rogers suggested that Councillors review the other drawings submitted.

Councillor Jackson asked that Councillor Rogers pass on his thanks to the person that submitted the images, but felt that cost of the statues submitted would be prohibitive. He did not mind whether the plinth was brick or stone.

Councillor Jones stated that moving the mining wheel had been decided; it was past the point of considering new submissions for the design. He was confident that once George Humphries' family sees the final design they will be happy.

Councillor Jones moved to ask the architect to revisit the design. Councillor Salt said that she is happy to follow the lead in increasing the height of the plinth, but feels it is very important that the family are on board. Councillor Smith seconded.

It was agreed that the plinth design be altered and then consultation take place with the family. It was also agreed that some discussion takes place with Staffordshire Moorlands District Council regarding the moving of the wheel.

34. TO CONSIDER THE TOWN COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO THE DISTRICT COUNCIL CAR PARKING CONSULTATION (EMAIL ATTACHED)

The Chief Officer outlined that Staffordshire Moorlands District Council have appointed a consultancy firm regarding car parking who are asking for representatives from the Town Council (Mayor plus one other Councillor) as well as other community representatives.

A link to the survey that Staffordshire Moorlands District Council are carrying out has been posted on Facebook.

Councillor Jones stated that he has been asked to attend as Mayor, but is happy to step aside should the Committee wish to nominate another representative. He felt in the interest of balance, the other representative should be a Labour Councillor. Councillor Jones said he felt that the representative for Biddulph should meet together before attending a meeting with the consultants in order to provide a clear message.

Councillor Jackson agreed with the need for a pre-meeting, but said he was unclear whether the consultancy or Biddulph Town Council should recruit the community representatives.

Councillor Perkin nominated Councillor Salt; Councillor Smith seconded. Councillor Salt confirmed she was happy to be a member of the group, but stated she felt that a Town Council position should be agreed.

The Chief Officer clarified that, at present, the consultancy firm are just seeking views to form a strategy; the Town Council can form a position regarding the strategy.

Councillor Jackson said he thought that there is already a Car Parking strategy group, which Councillor Jones and Councillor Yates sit on. Councillor Jackson felt that a Moorlands wide car parking strategy is unlikely to work as the three main towns in the district have such different needs.

Councillor Jones said he did not feel that there would be radical differences of opinion between him and Councillor Salt.

Councillor Davies said he felt that it is likely that the group will be looking to understand what the problems are rather than expecting representatives to come up with solutions. Once the strategy is made, the Town Council can formulate a formal response.

Councillor Yates said he wondered if Councillor Jones should be on both the Staffordshire Moorlands District Council car parking group and this working group, as there may be an overlap. Councillor Yates nominated Councillor Davies, Councillor Perkin seconded.

Councillor Jones clarified that he would be happy with this arrangement.

Councillor Rogers said he had concerns that Biddulph was treated the same as Leek and Cheadle.

35. TO CONSIDER PROVIDING SUPPORT FOR A BIDDULPH LOCALITY OFFICER, PART OF ADDITIONAL SUPPORT PROVIDED TO THE VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR BY SUPPORT STAFFORDSHIRE

The Chief Officer stated that Support Staffordshire had approached the Town Council to propose the recruitment of a Locality Officer to enhance capacity in the local voluntary and community sector in Biddulph, recognising that much of Support Staffordshire's work has concentrated on Leek. The Town Council could contribute to this post either financially (about £7000 for 12 months) or providing office space. Support Staffordshire are keen to involve the Town Council in the recruitment process.

Councillor Perkin said he thought this would be a good option and hosting the officer would be a good option as the space is available..

Councillor Davies asked if the role was time limited. The Chief Officer confirmed it would initially be for a 12 month post, hopefully starting in April. There would be potential to extend if the post is successful. Councillor Davies said he would like the option to review the post periodically.

Councillor Sheldon felt it was a very positive idea and supported basing the post in the Town Hall. She would like to see the loss of community groups in Biddulph being addressed.

Councillor Salt said she felt that there was a lack of business case, costings and KPIs. She felt that there is not evidence that community groups are struggling, it has anecdotally been thought to be the case. The Town Council had previously given a grant to Support Staffordshire. She requested a briefing paper.

The Chief Officer said she would continue to develop a proposal if the Committee is happy to move forward with, but had not wanted to proceed further with this until she had gauged the level of interest in this arrangement.

Councillor Jackson suggested inviting Support Staffordshire to a future Committee or Town Council meeting to give more information, but didn't really see any negatives with regard to the proposed arrangement. He also felt that hosting the worker would be beneficial to building relationships.

Councillor Yates said he would like to see a scoping document, but would also like to see the Town Hall hosting the space. He was concerned about the impact of Covid-19 on children and communities and felt that a significant input is needed to get some activities re-started.

Councillor Jones moved to support in principle the role, pending further information. Councillor Yates seconded. Councillors voted in support of this proposal

36. TO CONSIDER THE TOWN COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO THE PROPOSED PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDER (PSPO), EMAIL ATTACHED

Biddulph Town Council have been asked for a formal consultation response. Any differences from the previous PSPO are minimal. Police have reported that the previous PSPO was very effective in managing anti-social behaviour (ASB) in the Town Centre.

Councillor Rogers expressed concerns it only moves ASB elsewhere. Councillor Yates said that he was surprised that it was only limited to the Sainsbury's area, and would expect it to cover the full extent of the High Street, especially to the south end of the High Street.

Councillor McLoughlin wondered if the footprint of the PSPO was sufficient and felt it should include Wharf Road car park.

Councillor Yates moved to recommend that the area is extended the full extent of the High Street to the boundary of John Street to the East and the boundary

of the Wharf Road car park to the west. Councillor Barlow seconded. All voted in favour.

37.TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE CHIEF OFFICER ON THE DORSET DRIVE POCKET PARK; TO AGREE NEXT STEPS AND TIMESCALES

Before and after pictures of the Dorset Drive pocket park were shared. The plan is to include a bench, though there are some concerns from the neighbours about people congregating in the area. The Chief Officer will consult with the residents regarding this. Councillor Sheldon is working with the Chief Officer to identified orchard type trees and wetland planting. The government grant has been spent.

Councillor Rogers stated that the paddock that had previously concerned neighbours was more hidden away and felt there wasn't the same risk at the pocket park due to the area being so visible. Councillor Yates agreed.

Councillor Jackson said that orchard trees are available free of charge from Councillor Porter at Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, if they are suitable.

Councillor Yates clarified that Councillor Porter has offered 5 orchards to Biddulph, and the pocket park includes one of these that could be earmarked for use.

Councillor Salt stated that there needs to be additional bins. The Chief Officer confirmed there is a bin in the vicinity.

Councillor Sheldon said that the fruit trees need to be self-pollinating. She felt that some boundary or hedging, as Councillor Yates suggested, would be beneficial. Councillor Sheldon is investigating appropriate marshland plants.

38.TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM COUNCILLOR SALT IN RELATION TO THE NEWLY FORMED BIDDULPH SPORTS COUNCIL

Councillor Salt clarified that this is a relaunch of Biddulph Sports Council. Four officers have been elected: Kerry Ann - Chair, Damon – Deputy Chair, Beth – Secretary, Danny - Treasurer. The Group will meet in March, but plan to meet bi-monthly after. The current focus is young people and sport, women, mental health and social prescribing, being a central hub for all things sport and wellbeing in the town.

Councillor Smith said she attended the meeting and felt that it was a very enthusiastic positive meeting.

Councillor Jackson thanked Councillor Salt for her work, and felt it was an opportune moment for the Sports Council to be restarted.

39. TO CONSIDER THE TOWN COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO COUNTY COUNCIL FUNDING FOR CYCLE WAYS, REFERRED FROM TOWN COUNCIL

The Chief officer confirmed that this item was referred from Town Council. The consultation runs until 5 March 2021.

Councillor Yates said this was relating to Covid-19 related cycling improvements and felt it had been unfair that Staffordshire Moorlands had been missed out in the opportunity for funding from Staffordshire County Council. After the Town Council meeting, Councillor Yates had liaised with Councillor Flunder and funding has been allocated. Councillor Yates said that now funding had been received, there was no need to provide a formal response, though he would like to see the formulation of a cycling strategy.

Councillor Jones thanked Councillor Yates and Salt for flagging this, and Councillor Flunder for acting on this so quickly.

Councillor Salt clarified that the reason Biddulph Town Council don't need to get involved in the consultation is that funding has been provided from elsewhere and the consultation is relevant to Newcastle, Cannock and Burton.

Councillor Rogers said until the funding is received it should be pursued.

Councillor Perkin moved that a response should not be pursued; Councillor Jones seconded. All in favour, Councillor Rogers abstained.

The meeting ended at 7:50pm.

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