

## **MINUTES OF THE TOWN AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 16 MARCH 2021**

### **PRESENT**

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

Councillor McLoughlin read out a statement for the benefit of those viewing the meeting via live streaming and outlining etiquette for remote meetings.

### **40.APOLOGIES**

- Councillor Smith

### **41.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.

### **42.MINUTES**

- a) The Minutes of the Town and Community committee meeting held on Tuesday 16 February 2021 were **approved** and will be signed when social distancing measures permit.

b) The Minutes of the Environment and Climate Change Working Group meeting held on 4 March 2021 were **received**.

**43.TO APPROVE REPLACEMENT ‘WELCOME TO BIDDULPH’ SIGNAGE AT BOTH ENDS OF THE TOWN (QUOTATIONS TO BE TABLED)**

The Chief Officer outlined that there had been estimates for replacement of signage at both ends of the town, but there are significant price differences depending on the product; aluminium signs are significantly cheaper. A photo of the current signs was shared showing rust. An example of an existing powder coated aluminium sign was shared. Longevity does not seem to differ significantly between powder coated aluminium and cast signs.

Councillor McLoughlin asked if the signs would still be black with gold lettering. The Chief Officer confirmed that this is the case.

Councillor Jones said that given that there does not seem to be a significant difference in aesthetics and that it is public money, he would recommend the powder coated aluminium option.

Councillor Jackson and Councillor Rogers said that there should not be too much information on the signage. Councillor Jackson asked how quotes will be circulated. The Chief Officer confirmed that that a proof and quotes will be provided for the next meeting.

Councillor Barlow asked if there was an anti-graffiti paint available the Chief Officer said this could be asked of the suppliers.

Councillor Rogers suggested relocating the older signs to other entrances to the town.

**44.TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM COUNCILLOR GARVEY IN RELATION TO A ‘20’S PLENTY’ MEETING ATTENDED RECENTLY**

Councillor Garvey attended a meeting on 2 March regarding the 20’s plenty campaign and had previously shared a briefing note.

The organisation lobbying for this is campaigning for 20mph to be the standard speed limit for urban streets for reasons of road safety, and reduction in severity of the impact where road traffic accidents do occur. Furthermore the reduction in speed encourages walking and cycling, improves air quality and reduces noise. Other reasons provided include promoting community, and public support.

Approaches used in the campaign are zones and limits. Zones include signage and traffic calming, and this is favoured by Staffordshire County Council, though funding is limited. Potential issues that occur with creating 20mph zones include expense, inconsistent speeding and that they are time consuming to implement. However, the advantage is that the zones are self enforcing. The alternative is for wider limits using signage and road markings only. This however, requires enforcement, but at lower cost with easier installation processes and generally encouraging smoother driving. The limits are enforceable but not all Police forces will carry out enforcement of the limit. Compliance does appear to improve over time. Technological advances may also support compliance. The most cost effective approach does appear to be signage. Councillor Garvey presented case studies and suggested that the targeted approach appeared most beneficial.

There is no funding available for 20mph from Staffordshire County Council, nor central government funding, so any funds would need to be sourced locally. Costs include Traffic Regulation orders (£4000 per change), signs (£300 a sign) and surveying costs. On new developments, the cost will be borne by the developer.

Councillor Garvey proposed the following:

- Biddulph Town Council watch a presentation from the Group.
- A survey is completed to gauge popularity for 20mph zones.
- Specify 20mph limits are enforced for new developments.
- A working group is established to identify suitable test locations.

Councillor Jones said he would be keen to try, but is concerned by the lack of funding available.

Councillor Salt said she was concerned about the speed of cars down Park Lane; Park Lane and Woodhouse Lane should be a priority, particularly near the schools. Councillor Salt also suggested lobbying for the County Council to change their approach and offer financial support; Section 106 development money could also be used.

Councillor Garvey clarified that that the whole route of school journeys should be targeted not just the last 100m of the journey. Signage can be a good first step.

Councillor Davies said the targeting of residential and urban streets is important for cyclists and supports the potential for new cycle routes through town. This would also support people using electric scooters to use the streets safely. Signage is the cheaper option but also more cycle friendly. Councillor Davies believed that 106 money is available from the Uplands site.

Councillor Jackson said when working as County Councillor, he managed to get a number of roads at Brown Edge reduced to 30mph, and it wasn't too expensive. He calculated that on Biddulph East alone there would be at least 8 signs which would be expensive. He also felt due to the road layout of Biddulph it would be hard to get a small number of 20mph zones – with lower speed limits unlikely to be accepted at Park Lane, the A527 and the bypass .

Councillor McLoughlin queried about the survey process that Councillor Jackson undertook in Brown Edge, which Councillor Jackson said in Brown Edge had been carried out by local Council Officers.

Councillor Barlow said doing the whole town would be unlikely to work, but pinpointed certain areas would be beneficial.

Councillor Garvey confirmed that arterial routes would be maintained at current limits, it is smaller urban areas where the speed limit to be reduced.

Councillor Jones said Biddulph Moor had only four entrances, and identified Dorset Drive and Pennine Way as being key areas of concern.

Councillor Yates said it was highly stressed at the presentation that it should be whole towns, or whole villages, rather than small areas that should be targeted. This also reduces the cost of signage is needed. Given that the savings come from reduced emergency services attendance on the road or as a result of accident, Councillor Yates suggested lobbying police and crime commissioners to support funding. He also suggested that reducing speed improves traffic flow. Councillor Yates outlined the role of police and other drivers in the enforcement to the limits. Councillor Yates felt that Biddulph Moor would be a good case study.

Councillor Yates moved to write a letter to Staffordshire Moorlands District Council recommending that all residential developments from the Local Plan be developed as 20mph zones. Councillor Jones seconded.

Councillor Jackson said if the A527 and key routes could be 20mph as well that would simplify the process.

Councillor McLoughlin said that previously Staffordshire County Council had vetoed any measure that reduced the traffic speed along the A527.

Councillor Rogers said he didn't think it was plausible for a blanket 20mph to be placed throughout Biddulph.

Councillor Sheldon said that Wedgwood Road should be noticed as a dangerous road and she was glad to see road safety on the Agenda.

Councillor Jones declared an interest in Biddulph Moor being a test site as someone who lives on New Street.

Councillors agreed to put the motion to recommend the Town Council approve to request that Staffordshire Moorlands District Council require all new developments in the Town be developed by 20mph zones. All voted in favour. Councillor Salt, Councillor Garvey and Councillor Jackson did not vote as they are not members of the Committee, though all expressed their support of the idea.

#### **45.TO CONSIDER BRANDING ON WORKWEAR FOR OFFICERS AND VOLUNTEERS**

Quotes had been presented to the Committee to consider and opinion garnered regarding what was presented. Councillor Jones asked that whatever was made was made available for Councillors to purchase.

Councillor Jackson asked if it would be part of the employee terms and conditions to wear the workwear provided.

Councillor Yates said he would like items to be available to Councillors also.

Councillor Sheldon asked what kind of material the t-shirts were made from as polycotton can be uncomfortable in the heat.

Councillor Davies proposed that cheapest quote should be approved, subject to clarification about the material. Councillor Perkin seconded. All in favour; Councillor Sheldon abstained from the vote.

#### **46.TO RECEIVE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT A BIDDULPH LOCALITY OFFICER (SUPPORT STAFFORDSHIRE)**

Support Staffordshire had previously suggested working with Biddulph Town Council to employ a Locality Officer and options were put forward about either providing accommodation for the officer or contributing towards the

employment costs of the officer. Further information had been shared in the form of a briefing note.

The Chief Officer made a recommendation to accommodate the Officer, and setting regular opportunities to review the role. Costs of hosting the Officer are hard to ascertain given the lack of service charge cost information charged to Biddulph Town Council for the Town Hall.

Councillor Salt asked how the success of the role would be measured. The Chief Officer stated that some of the criteria will be qualitative as well as looking at successes of grant applications, number of groups worked with; further information will be developed with Support Staffordshire.

Councillor Jackson said Biddulph Youth and Community Zone had appointed a fundraiser who had presented a document to the board about funding opportunities. Councillor Jackson suggested the locality officer work with this fundraiser.

Councillor Rogers supported the Chief Officer's recommendation.

Councillor Jones felt that the hosting costs would be negligible, and also supported this option. He also suggested that linking in with the Biddulph Youth and Community Zone was a good option.

Councillor Jones recommended pursuing the option of hosting the Support Staffordshire Locality officer, which will go to Town Council for final approval. Councillor Davies seconded. All in favour.

#### **47. TO CONSIDER THE DEVELOPMENT OF A REGENERATION STRATEGY/PLAN TO INCORPORATE THE CURRENT AND FUTURE PROJECTS AND ASPIRATIONS (IDEAS ATTACHED)**

The Chief Officer noted that the Town Council had discussed a significant number of regeneration initiatives previously, which would benefit from being pulled together into one document. This would help to gain funding and support from other partners.

Councillor Salt suggested that climate change be incorporated within the regeneration plan, including packaging, refill schemes and the green economy.

Councillor Yates wondered how post-covid recovery would impact on the ability to regenerate a town centre.

Councillor Jackson said it is important to have ideas ready for when funding does become available from different sources.

Councillor Sheldon said the opening of Aldi provides opportunity to promote the town.

Councillor Salt said that she was very pleased that the Town Council did not feel the need to employ external consultants and had the expertise to develop the strategy internally.

Councillor Jones proposed and Councillor Davies seconded for the Chief Officer to commence the development of a regeneration strategy. All in favour.

**48.TO CONSIDER LIGHTING AND OTHER ELECTRICAL IMPROVEMENTS TO THE EXTERIOR OF THE TOWN HALL AND RECEPTION (2018 SPECIFICATION ATTACHED)**

The Chief Officer stated that while quotes had been obtained in 2018, lease conditions prevented the work from taking place at that time. The quotes include providing a TV for advertising in reception, additional power at the front of the Town Hall, up lighting trees to the side of the Town Hall and floodlighting for the Town Hall, which could be filtered.

Councillor Jones supported this, but added getting the Twinning mural back on display as a priority and adding spot lighting to this.

Councillor Yates requested placing a hotspot at the front of the Town Hall to support the town centre. Councillor Rogers suggested placing a webcam.

Councillor Davies proposed, Councillor Jones seconded for the Chief Officer getting quotes and pursuing to the electrical improvements to the Town Hall and Reception.

All in favour.

The meeting ended at 8:02pm.

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