

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE TOWN AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 19 JANUARY 2021

PRESENT

- Councillor Jones - The Mayor
- Councillor Rushton - The Deputy Mayor
- Councillor Baddeley
- Councillor Barlow
- Councillor Brady
- Councillor Davies (Chaired Meeting)
- Councillor Jackson
- Councillor McLoughlin
- Councillor Perkins
- Councillor Rogers
- Councillor Sheldon
- Councillor Smith
- Councillor Yates

23. APOLOGIES

- Councillor Salt

24. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests & Dispensations: None
- b) Other Interests: Councillor Sheldon in anything pertaining to Biddulph in Bloom.

25. MINUTES

The minutes of the Town and Community Committee meeting held on Tuesday 17 November 2020 were **approved**. They will be **signed** at a later date.

26. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON PROPOSED 2021 EVENTS

The Chief Officer gave an update that vaccinations have been taking place at the Town Hall for Covid-19. The Chief Officer gave thanks to everyone who has worked hard in the clinics and also the willingness of people to volunteer. By the end of the week, Biddulph should be well ahead on vaccinations. Due to the national setup, patients are now likely to be given quite short notice to come in for vaccination.

The Events and Partnership Officer provided an update on planned upcoming events. No major events are being planned before September 2021 due to lockdown and Covid restrictions.

In September, some of the events planned include a Heritage weekend (hopefully coinciding with activities at the Grange Gardens) and car show.

Events that are proposed for October include a pumpkin trail at the Country Park and Dementia Friendly Cinema.

For November, events will include the Royal British Legion 100-year celebration, for which an information pack is awaited, the Christmas Lights Switch-ons, supporting the Rotary with Santa, a wedding fair and the Christmas Toy Appeal.

It is also hoped to do a woodland Santa event for Christmas.

Councillor Jones asked about the Biddulph Festival. The Events and Partnerships Officer confirmed that the Festival are looking at holding a 'pocket festival', with a more limited programme of events, but this depends on restrictions in place at the time.

Councillor Smith asked if there would be scope to do an Ethical Fair, and suggested an online one if a real fair is not an option; it was confirmed that this has been considered alongside markets and a clothing event.

Councillor Sheldon advised that the annual Shrove Tuesday event booked for the Town Hall was planned but likely to be cancelled.

Councillor Yates asked if a mini half term festival could happen in October, when most people are likely to have been vaccinated; the Events and Partnerships Officer confirmed this is an option.

Councillor Jones stated he is holding out for an end of mayoral term party, but this may need to be hosted by the next Mayor.

27. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON STATION ROAD DEVELOPMENT

The architects rendering of the proposed mining wheel monument was shared.

Councillor Jones stated that he was disappointed with the proposals and hoped for a more angular or oval plinth. He felt the plinth shown will get walked on.

Councillor Jackson also said he was disappointed. He felt that the design does not meet the brief and that the bricks will get weathered in the design. He would like to see the plinth raised to 5 or 6 feet to be visible from the bypass and highlighted the need to consult with the family of George Humphries.

Councillor Yates agreed he would like to see the wheel placed on a substantial plinth. He is supportive of the wheel being moved, as it would be well displayed and visible, and doesn't feel this is achieved at the current location at the Town Hall.

Councillor Smith said she felt bricks were supposed to be a mark of respect but in this design the bricks are likely to be walked on or ridden on by bikes or scooters. She would like to see the plinth raised.

Councillor Rogers said he felt the names should be visible easily in the vertical plane, such as in a dome top.

Councillor Sheldon said that the design looks too flat and feels it will be climbed.

The Councillors discussed the height and shape of the plinth with Councillor Jones preferring an oblong or oval design and Councillor Jackson round or oval.

Councillor Jackson moved to refer back to the architect to be redesigned; Councillor Jones seconded. All were in favour.

The Chief Officer will bring the new design back to the Committee to consider in February.

Councillor Jones also asked about the fountains, which the Chief Officer confirmed are ready to be turned on; this will be undertaken when weather improves.

28. TO NOTE THAT AN ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP WILL TAKE PLACE IN FEBRUARY AND TO CONSIDER CONTENT FOR THIS MEETING

Councillor Yates asked how the management of green spaces and their role in mitigating climate change could be coordinated with the Neighbourhood Plan. He suggested that the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group be used to manage green spaces.

Councillor Davies suggested that Section 106 money could be used to create wildlife units in green spaces.

Councillor Perkin felt that the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group was not the right place for green space management, though the Neighbourhood Plan should be a guiding principle.

Councillor McLoughlin said that a lot of expertise had gone in to the Neighbourhood Plan and should be used.

Councillor Jones had been trying to do plant a community orchard and felt that there are administrative delays from the District Council.

Councillor Yates clarified that he felt it was important to use local knowledge and that developing the green spaces should be put forward to the agenda for the Working Group.

Councillor Smith felt that the Town Council should lead by example and the Town Hall should be made to be as energy efficient as possible.

Councillor McLoughlin asked what other green spaces the Town Council can lease, as some District Council green spaces elsewhere are not well maintained.

Councillor Sheldon said she was concerned that often there is money for new projects but not the maintenance, and this should be considered.

The Chief Officer summarised the items for discussion include:

- Green space development/management.
- Energy efficiency of Town Hall and Visitor Centre.
- Future asset acquisition.

- Maintenance of projects.

It was agreed these will be discussed at the Climate Change and Environment Working Group on 4 February.

29. A DISCUSSION ABOUT A POTENTIAL USE FOR THE BUS HUB, WHARF ROAD

Councillor Davies opened up the conversation with suggestions around the use of the bus hub; this was now within the Town Council's control.

Councillor Rogers suggested holding indoor market at the bus hub, once Covid restrictions have lifted.

Councillor Yates referred to the work that had been done at Kidsgrove Railway station.

Councillor Yates said he would like to see the space used as a coffee shop, and this could be put out to tender.

Councillor Jackson suggested there could be a timetable of events, and Councillor McLoughlin also felt it could be used for more than one purpose, potentially being hired out like an extra room of the Town Hall.

Councillor Davies read out list of suggested uses, which included:

- Indoor market.
- Bookshop.
- Gallery.
- Card Store.
- Internet access location.
- Local groups meeting place.
- Venue to display local history.
- Games club.
- Youth centre.

Councillor Yates said there is room for outside seating, and queried how much it would be used for an event space.

Councillor Jones felt there should be a consultation on what people would like to see it used for; he did not see it as an attractive location for outdoor seating.

Councillor Brady said that younger people should be involved in the discussion about its use.

Councillor Sheldon suggested that artists could demonstrate their craft at the hub.

Councillor Barlow suggested using the area for school displays and environmental companies' exhibitions.

Councillor Rogers noted how well Santa worked at the bus hub before Christmas.

It was agreed that the next action would be to consult with the public via social media and press releases through the Chronicle.

The meeting closed at 7.24pm.

Signed Date