

## **MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE TOWN AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 20 OCTOBER 2020**

### **PRESENT**

- The Mayor – Councillor Jones
- The Deputy Mayor – Councillor Rushton
- Councillor Brady
- Councillor Davies
- Councillor McLoughlin
- Councillor Perkin
- Councillor Rogers
- Councillor Yates

Also, in attendance

- Councillor Hart
- Councillor Harper
- Councillor Jackson
- Councillor Salt
- Councillor Swift

### **8. APOLOGIES**

- Councillor Barlow
- Councillor Redfern
- Councillor Sheldon
- Councillor Smith

### **9. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

- a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests & Dispensations: None
- b) Other Interests: Councillor Harper noted that he is not a member of this Committee

### **10. MINUTES**

- a) The Minutes of the Town and Community Committee meeting held on Tuesday 15 September 2020 were approved.
- b) The Notes of the Christmas Lights Working Group meeting held on Tuesday 22 September 2020 (attached) were received.

Councillor Jackson felt that the Town Council should extend their thanks to Paul Warwick for his support of town events; to donate the Christmas tree this year is very generous.

**11. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON STATION ROAD (STANDING AGENDA ITEM)**

- a) Feedback on memorial proposals following a meeting between Councillors Jones, Jackson and Harper.

Councillor Jones updated members that there had been a Zoom meeting and also a site visit. Consensus was that the balance wheel should be relocated to the mining memorial at Station Road. There would be an appropriate plinth.

This was a cost-effective way of ensuring that there is an appropriate memorial; sympathetic approaches had been made to the family. Councillor Jones noted that there had been some social media activity since this discussion.

Councillor Jackson noted that there seemed to be a misapprehension that the decision had already been made. The Town Council would need to commission an architect to complete an artist's impression. There would be a new plaque.

Councillor Jackson felt it was important to have the buy-in of the family; this issue touches the hearts of many. He had spoken to some ex-miners and most had been receptive to this proposal.

This was a way to ensure that the memorial can be seen from the inner relief road.

Councillor Harper wondered whether a member of the family could be invited to the group. Councillor Jones felt it was essential to ensure there were no misunderstandings.

The Chief Officer confirmed that she had spoken to Beverley Poole; there would be a cost to completing this piece of work. It was proposed by Councillor Jones and seconded by Councillor Davies to ask Beverley to come up with a drawing that could inform the next phase of this project.

- b) Update on requesting a lease rather than license from SMDC for this site

The Chief Officer updated members that the Town Council currently had a license to occupy the Station Road site (either side of the spur road; this had enabled the development to take place. The District Council officers had asked that the terms of the Sainsbury's land purchase should be sent to them (when these were known). The Chief Officer had sent this information and asked that the Town Council be granted a lease of the Station Road garden area; she was awaiting further information.

Councillor Yates asked whether the District Council legal work would be completed competently this time, to prevent incurring a large bill.

The Chief Officer noted that she was not in a position to comment on the competency of the Staffordshire Moorlands legal team; the Town Council was using very competent legal people.

This piece of work would then enable the Town Council to have security, when beginning further development. There will be no automatic write of renewal.

- c) Consideration of 'next steps' for development

The Chief Officer noted that planning permission had been granted to this entire site. Beverley Poole was happy to re-look at the plans for a Phase 2 when Councillors were happy to proceed. There had been discussions about amending one circle to include a time capsule and 'rainbow theme'.

## **12. TO RECEIVE A CONTRIBUTION OF ITEMS FROM BIDDULPH MUSEUM**

The Chief Officer noted that approximately 20 boxes had been gifted from the gentleman that had run Biddulph Museum previously. Unfortunately, this gentleman is unwell and had hoped that the Town Council would safeguard the future of these items, which had been gifted to him. An inventory would need to be created. In the meantime, a letter should be written which offered our thanks.

Councillor Salt noted that this gentleman was also a poet and photographer. Councillor Salt hoped that the Town Council could open a Museum in the

future. There was scope to display items in buildings that the Town Council had taken over.

There was discussion about the use of the cabinets in reception, the contents could be rotated.

Councillor Harper wondered whether there could be an award from the Mayor.

The Mayor noted that he was creating a Mayor's Civic Award for 2020-21. The Mayor would write to thank the gentleman for his generous donation.

### **13. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE MINING LAMPS AT ST JOHNS ROAD**

The Chief Officer had not been able to move this forward and sought the views of the Committee. The Town Council was not happy with the condition of these lamps. At the very least there could be renewed planting and painting. The Town Council could take on some responsibility for the management of these lamps.

Councillor Jackson noted that these lamps have been installed with arts funding. Councillor Jackson felt that this should be added to a Scrutiny Committee at the District Council; this could also be raised with Andrew Stoke. It was not appropriate that the Chief Officer had not received responses.

There was discussion about the state of the lamps and uncertainty about whether these had been disconnected or condemned.

Councillor Brady proposed that Councillor Salt should raise this with the District Council, seconded by Councillor Jones and agreed.

### **14. TO CONSIDER NEW LIGHTING IN THE TOWN CENTRE FOR CHRISTMAS**

The Chief Officer explained that the festoons to either side of the Town Hall needed replacing. The stars and icicles no longer worked. The Chief Officer had circulated a proposal from the Christmas Lights contractor; this included the purchase of lights and new fixtures on the Town Hall. The Chief Officer noted:

- The lights are in 5 or 6 different sections so can be replaced in sections. All should be good for 3 or 4 years and then small repairs.

- The light curtain is 5 metres deep and 10-12m wide with some flashing lamps as well to make it sparkle.
- 6 x light curtains on the front of the Town Hall would be £5,536.00 plus vat provided and installed.
- In future years there would also be an extra £320.00 plus vat fitting charge for the decoration.

The Chief Officer reminded members that the budget for Christmas lights is £26,000 per year. The current contract value is £18,030 (+VAT), so there is scope within the budget for additional investment, particularly as the Town Council don't have the expense of a switch-on event.

Councillor Salt was firmly opposed to spending this money this year; the perception to the public is that money is no object.

Councillor Harper would prefer a sign, such as 'Happy Christmas'.

Councillor Jones clarified that this would be like a waterfall across the Town Hall; it was a lot of money though. Perhaps a laser projector would be a better investment.

Councillor Yates stated that this was not a normal year; the Town Council should not spend unnecessarily.

Councillor Rushton reminded Councillors about her vision to add lights to homes.

Councillor Rogers felt that the proposal could be considered in the future.

Councillor Salt wondered whether the Town Council could spend £300 on LED lights, which could be distributed via the Foodbank. These would be battery operated. Councillor Brady proposed this; seconded by Councillor Rushton.

Councillor Rogers felt they should be distributed via other sources.

Councillor Jones proposed that £500 is spent on this project. Councillor Brady amended his proposal that the Town Council spend £500 on battery powered fairy lights, distributed via a range of venues, including the Youth and Community Zone, churches, and the Foodbank. Seconded by Councillor Rushton. Agreed.

Councillor Jones requested that Biddulph Moor was not forgotten.

**15. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON REGENERATION ACTIVITY**

The Chief Officer noted that the noticeboard for Halls Road that had been part-funded by Moorlands Partnership Board had been received.

The Chief Officer had submitted a further application to the Moorlands Partnership Board for £2000, which should be match-funded by the Town Council. This would enable clearance work to progress to renovate the old platform and install replacement bricks at the Gillow Heath Station.

The meeting closed at 8.34 pm.

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