

MINUTES OF THE TOWN AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 21 SEPTEMBER 2021

PRESENT

- Deputy Mayor - Councillor Garvey
- Councillor Baddeley
- Councillor Davies
- Councillor Harper
- Councillor Jackson
- Councillor McLoughlin
- Councillor Smith
- Councillor Sheldon
- Councillor Yates

11. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Jones, Councillor Perkin, Councillor Rushton and Councillor Salt.

12. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Disclosable pecuniary interests and dispensations:

Councillor Sheldon declared an interest in any matter relating to Biddulph in Bloom.

Other interests:

None declared.

Councillors congratulated Biddulph in Bloom on their recent Gold Award.

13. MINUTES

- a)** The minutes of the Town and Community Committee meeting held on 20 July 2021 were signed.

Proposed by Councillor Rogers, seconded by Councillor Garvey, all in favour.

- b)** The notes of the Environment and Climate Change Working Group meeting held on 22 July 2021 were received.

Proposed by Councillor Davies, seconded by Councillor Baddeley, all in favour.

- c) The notes of the Environment and Climate Change Working Group meeting held on 26 August 2021 were received.

Proposed by Councillor Davies, seconded by Councillor Garvey. All in favour.

- d) The notes of the Young Peoples Working Group meeting held on 9 September 2021 were received.

Councillor Jackson declared an interest as a Board Member of Biddulph Youth and Community Zone.

Proposed by Councillor Garvey, seconded by Councillor Sheldon. All in favour.

There was a discussion on whether outstanding issues from Working Group matters were fully closed or carried over.

Councillor Davies said that the Chair of the appropriate Working Group or Committee had the responsibility to ensure items which are not completed are presented on a future agenda at an appropriate time.

14. ITEM REQUESTED BY COUNCILLOR DAVIES: TO CONSIDER THE SUBMISSION ON RELATION TO OXHEY DRIVE (SUBMISSION ATTACHED)

Councillor Davies outlined a concern raised by a local resident regarding the traffic on Oxhey Drive and the speed of that traffic. He proposed several traffic reduction or calming measures reducing the use of the road as a cut-through. The resident completed a survey with local residents, of which 20 requested a planter type road block, 3 traffic calming measures and 8 no change.

Councillor Rogers said he had been approached by local people, but was not in favour of the no-through route. He was concerned that blocking the road off will cause problems for multiple individuals, services and additional traffic problems. He felt that the traffic calming measures were preferable to closing the through-route, as closing the route would cause the problem to move elsewhere.

Councillor Yates said that traffic calming measures brought their own issues, and felt that issues brought about by closing the route would be temporary. He also felt that the through route closure would support safer routes to school, and would be beneficial to other areas. He suggested this may also reduce car usage for short journeys.

Councillor Harper said he would like to know the accident rate and the results of a traffic survey to establish the facts behind the concern.

Councillor Sheldon said she was reminded about traffic calming at Bemersley Road. She said that once these were put in they caused more noise and pollution and were unpopular with local residents. She said rumble strips had been effective at the Briarswood area.

Councillor Jackson said that the County Council need to be engaged with the discussion, though the Town Council could support a particular position. He said that he had concerns about how this could impact the usage. He said he needed evidence to back up people's perception of the issue of speed.

Councillor Davies said that the County Councillor, Councillor Lawson was aware of the issue.

Councillor Garvey said that he was also concerned about moving the problem and suggested a 20mph speed limit be considered. He supported Councillor Yates' suggestion that road closure planters be spaced far enough apart to allow emergency service or dustbin lorry access should this route be pursued.

Councillor Davies noted that the survey was anecdotal evidence. He also clarified that the traffic calming measures suggested did not include speed bumps, rather chicanes. He also noted the need for evidence.

Councillor Yates suggested that Dorset Drive be considered alongside Ox-hey Drive. He noted the need for sufficient consultation.

The Chief Officer stated that as this had become a Highways issue, this would need to be referred to the Recreations and Amenities Committee.

Councillor Yates proposed that rubber strips are added to Ox-hey Drive and Dorset Drive. This request will go direct to the County Councillor; Councillor Garvey seconded, all in favour.

The response will be considered at a later Recreation and Amenities Committee meeting.

15. TO REVISIT POSSIBLE LITTER PICKING ACTIVITY; COUNCILLORS TO IDENTIFY FOCUS

The Chief Officer said that this continued a pre-pandemic plan to carry out a litter pick or support other organisations to litter pick. Mow Lane had been identified as a hot-spot.

Councillor Smith requested that Church Road playing fields be considered, having already organised several litter picks at this location.

Councillor Rogers suggested Akesmore Lane and queried whether the Resident's Association may be able to support this activity.

Councillor Yates noted that while Mow Lane gets some cleaning, a deep clean/litter pick beyond the verges was necessary. He also suggested completing a road closure in order to complete a litter pick; he queried to know what insurance would be in place.

Councillor Sheldon said she had been approached by volunteers who wanted to litter pick along the bypass and along Mill Hayes Road. She noted that some people do not want to partake in a more formal/organised litter pick.

Councillor Davies said that Staffordshire Moorlands District Council will litter pick Mill Hayes road, on request.

Councillor Jackson said he was concerned that little was done to address or prosecute people that drop litter, whilst a significant money is spent on cleaning up.

Councillor Harper said that litter picking had previously been considered as part of community payback/restorative justice schemes and wondered if this would be an option in this instance.

Councillor Sheldon said that community payback scheme now seems to be restricted to Stoke-on-Trent due to the need to pay the supervisor.

Councillor Sheldon noted the Rotary Club carried out a successful litter pick during a recent summer.

Councillor Smith said that she had received feedback that people are noticing litter more as they are spending more time at home due to the pandemic.

Councillor Yates proposed a road closure on Mow Lane and Akesmore Lane, to carry out a deep clean litter pick in Late Autumn.

Councillor Smith proposed a large social media drive for litter picking in the Biddulph Area.

Councillor Garvey seconded. All voted in favour.

16. COMMUNITY SUPPORT:

- a) The **receive** an update on the new Biddulph Community Officer (Support Staffordshire).

The Chief Officer said that the hosted Support Staffordshire Biddulph Community Officer had been in post for approximately three weeks. Her upcoming work includes mapping community groups and building upon the community directory. She will be contacting ward Councillors to see how she can best support local groups. She will also be undertaking a volunteer recruitment drive. She can offer support to potential, new and existing community groups. This is particularly beneficial as there have been significant changes in the management committees of community groups since Covid.

Councillor Jackson asked if the Biddulph Community Officer could be invited to future Committee and Council meetings.

Councillor Harper asked what support the Biddulph Community Officer can offer the differing range of groups that are present in Biddulph. The Chief Officer stated that she can provide training, support grant applications, access the tools available via Support Staffordshire and supporting volunteer recruitment, as examples.

Councillor McLoughlin suggested that the Biddulph Community Officer could be present at upcoming community events. It was noted that she is already arranging several outreach opportunities.

- b) To **consider** whether the Town Council can support the creation of Resident's Associations

Councillor Jackson asked what had prompted this item. The Chief Officer noted that the Knypersley Residents Association had ceased to exist during discussion in the initial Conway Road parking working group. She wondered whether support could be considered for communities across Biddulph who similarly struggled to meet due to loss of venue during the pandemic.

Councillor Rogers said that Resident's Associations do tend to represent only a small number of individuals, and suggested that people from non-central areas

of Biddulph are unlikely to attend the Town Hall for a meeting. He also noted that the election of chairs/Officers was problematic.

Councillor Baddeley stated that at the Gillow Heath Residents Association, the meetings had previously been packed, though attendance declined. She felt there is limited interest and the only thriving resident's association is in Biddulph North.

Councillor Jackson said that when resident's associations work well, they can be very effective. He said that resident's associations based upon ward boundaries could be beneficial, but has not known of a previous resident's association in Biddulph East. He said that most issues are now discussed on Facebook and perhaps this should be more the focus of ward Councillors. He did not feel that the Town Council would be able to support the creation of Resident's Associations.

Both Councillor Jackson and Councillor Rogers noted that Resident's Associations tend to be better attended when there is a contentious issue being considered.

Councillor Harper noted that the Biddulph South Resident's Association struggled to continue after they were unable to elect a new Chair/Deputy Chair. He didn't feel that the Town Hall was a suitable location and it wasn't possible to support the creation of resident's association.

Councillor Sheldon said she had noted a lack of interest in resident's associations.

The Chief Officer suggested that the Town Council could provide support when approached by those wishing to start up a resident's association and provide a venue, but not take an active role in encouraging the creation of a resident's association.

Councillor Rogers proposed that the Town Council advertise the support available for creating or running a resident association and see if there is any uptake.

Councillor Yates suggested that ward Councillors create ward forums or surgeries that do not operate along party lines. This could morph into a Resident Associations. Councillor Yates proposed a trial of a Biddulph West meeting to take place at the Town Hall. All voted in favour.

17. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE FOLLOWING PUBLICATIONS:

a) The Biddulph Directory

The Chief Officer noted that the Biddulph Directory had now been published on the Biddulph Town Council website. This advertises the services and activities available in Biddulph and this will be kept up to date. Some paper copies will be available, but the document will primarily be online.

Councillor Yates requested a watermark branding be added to the directory.

Councillor Garvey asked how it would be publicised. The Chief Officer asked that Councillors now support the spread of information.

Councillor Jackson asked if the Town Hall's details were available on the website. He also asked that the Town Council's thanks are passed on to the staff who created the directory.

Councillor Rogers requested that a paid advert be placed in the Chronicle to advertise the directory and support the local press.

b) The Town Guide

The Welcome Back Funding can cover printing costs of promotional material such as the directory and Town Guide. A copy of the Town Guide was shared, which includes historical detail, local attractions, local councillors and the role of the Town Council.

The Town Guide will be passed to local estate agents.

Councillor Davies said he was very impressed with the very comprehensive Town Guide.

Councillor Sheldon said she was pleased that Welcome Back funding had been used for such a positive initiative.

Councillor Smith said she was very impressed with the work. There was discussion about additional functionality with the online version. The Events and Partnership Officer confirmed that this is being explored.

Councillor Rogers said it is important to print in small batches so that a large quantity of out of date material isn't held in stock when there are changes.

c) 'Explore Biddulph'

The recently created local leaflets for those staying within Biddulph was shared with Councillors. This is designed to fill a gap in information available to visitors. This will be shared within Biddulph at shops and libraries and hopefully at local towns.

Councillor Yates said that Mow Cop Castle falls partially within the boundaries of Biddulph. He suggested a review to see what additional information could be included.

There was some discussion about including Biddulph Castle.

Councillor Garvey suggested an additional leaflet covering Biddulph Walks. The Chief Officer said that this could be considered for a future publication.

Councillor Smith suggested a minor amendment to phrasing. Councillor Harper suggested the addition of riding stables.

Councillor Jackson asked if Welcome Back funding could be used to help fund this and also suggested liaison with Staffordshire Moorlands District Council Tourist teams.

d) 'On Our Streets'

This is a short guide to local businesses.

Councillor Harper said he had been provided copies of similar documents in other places.

Councillor Davies said this will go out of date quickly so it will need to be regularly reviewed.

e) Programme of events

A monthly programme of events to advertise the events taking place within the Town and at the Town Hall was shared to Councillors.

Councillor Smith said she was pleased to see how busy some of the local groups were.

All agreed these were very impressive documents and were much-needed.

18. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE BIDDULPH CALENDAR, 2022

Councillors had viewed the submissions for the Biddulph Calendars and will continue to be able to view over the next few weeks.. It is anticipated that 400 calendars will be printed. Three received quotes were considered, but there had been no quote or acknowledgement received from the Biddulph firm approached.

Councillor Rogers proposed to provisionally accept the quote from a Stoke based print provider subject to approval at the Finance Strategy and Management Committee meeting next week. If a quote is received from the Biddulph based firm in the mean time, this will be considered next week; Councillor Davies seconded. All in favour.

19. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE WELCOME BACK FUNDING

a) To consider footfall analysis

The Chief Officer put forward two options, one included participation with a GPS/Bluetooth footfall analysis being considered by the District, or a manual footfall analysis. It is unclear whether the Staffordshire Moorlands District Council footfall analysis will be funded separately from Biddulph Town Council Welcome Back funding allocation.

Councillor Jackson noted that the GPS footfall analysis is easier to collate. He felt it may be beneficial to compare current footfall with footfall after the Aldi opening.

Councillor McLoughlin queried whether there is sufficient time prior to Aldi opening to carry out such analysis. He also had concerns that the GPS approach will not be as accurate due to the elderly population.

Councillor Davies suggested using CCTV analysis; the Chief Officer noted that the need for adherence to data protection law.

Councillor Smith said she was aware that seasonal fluctuations may skew the data when comparing High Street footfall pre and post-Aldi.

The Chief Officer noted that both schemes could run alongside each other.

Councillor Garvey proposed, Councillor Davies seconded to proceed with the Staffordshire Moorlands District Council scheme as well as the manual footfall calculation. All in favour.

- b) To **consider** promotion of the town centre for those arriving on the bus.

The Chief Officer said that vinyl displays on empty shop windows were being considered and welcomed Councillor suggestions for such displays.

Councillor Davies noted that the pictures shared as part of the calendar entries could be considered.

Councillor Yates also suggested including some buildings on the outskirts of the town centre, such as the Minster Mills building. This would brighten the area and promote the town centre.

Councillor Harper suggested linking up with the coaches that took parties or groups to the National Trust.

Councillor Yates proposed to proceed with the vinyl displays at the Bus Hub, town centre locations and the Mill Buildings on Station Road, with the consent of the building owners; seconded by Councillor Garvey. All in favour.

20. TO APPROVE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S WORKING GROUP

- a) To support the establishment of young people's forums

The Chief Officer said that the Young People's Working Groups had started and attendance had increased. A number of recommendations came out of the groups. The establishment of Young People Forum's to actively encourage young people's participation in decision-making was one suggestion.

- b) To use the Bus Hub as an ad hoc detached youth work venue in the evenings.

Biddulph Youth and Community Zone, as the key provider of youth services in the town, would be able to support some of the issues experienced by young people and by Sainsbury's in the town centre by providing a youth work service at the Bus Hub on a regular basis.

- c) To make a financial contribution towards a detached youth work scheme.

No figure had been received for the cost of this, but will be presented when received. If received in time for the Finance, Strategy and Management Committee, the figure will be considered at this meeting.

- d) To work with partners to continue improve relationships between young people and agencies in the town.

Councillor Yates asked if the use of the bus hub as a youth work venue would prevent other use, this will need to be considered.

Councillor Jackson did not partake or vote in this discussion due to his interest as a Board Member of Biddulph Youth and Community Zone.

All voted in favour.

21. TO RECEIVE VERBAL FEEDBACK FROM WORKING GROUPS (MEETINGS HELD MONDAY 20 SEPTEMBER 2021):

a) Civic Events Working Group

The Chief Officer summarised that the Working Group had recommended that the Town Council would like to support the Biddulph Royal British Legion with their flag dedication and their centenary events.

The Town Council also will undertake to hold Remembrance Day and Remembrance Sunday events, as well as partake in the Green Canopy, Jubilee Woodland scheme and Ceremony for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June 2021. This will be progressed at the next Working Group meeting in October.

Councillor Smith suggested following up a previous year's suggestion in supporting people's visits to the Arboretum as part of the Remembrance day/ Sunday events.

Councillor Yates said that he hadn't had a favourable response to the suggestions of the location of the Jubilee Forests. The Chief Officer said that the land at the end of Thatcher Grove has been considered. Councillor Yates said he was concerned about the lack of priority given to tree planting by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council to combat climate change.

Councillor Garvey noted that the location of tree planting is a discussion that should be considered at the Environment and Climate Change Working Group.

b) Christmas Events Working Group

The Chief Officer noted that the Welcome Back funding will enhance the Christmas events. This includes Marquee Hire for the Christmas light switch-on on 27th November. The Biddulph Moor switch on will take place on 4th

December and on 11th December a children's event is intended to take place in coordination with local churches.

Councillor Smith asked if the Welcome Back funding could be used to support the lighting costs. It was noted that the Welcome Back funding can only fund temporary improvements, though this may facilitate an enhanced Christmas lights event.

Councillor Harper asked for clarification around the funding for the Biddulph Moor Christmas Tree. It was confirmed that a Ward Councillor is buying the tree this year, though the Town Council will likely need to take on the purchase of the tree in future years. The Town Council already funds the lighting and much of the infrastructure of the event for Biddulph Moor Switch On.

The meeting ended at 8.57pm.

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