

MINUTES OF THE RECREATION AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 12 OCTOBER 2021

PRESENT

- Councillor Brady
- Councillor Hall
- Councillor Harper
- Councillor Jones
- Councillor Lawton
- Councillor Rogers
- Councillor Yates

24. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Hawley, Councillor Redfern and Councillor Rushton.

25. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

i) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests & Dispensations

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

ii) Other Interests: None.

26. MINUTES

a) To approve and sign the Minutes of the Recreation and Amenities Committee meeting held on 14 September 2021

Moved by Councillor Harper; seconded by Councillor Garvey and approved.

b) To receive the Notes from the Knypersley Highways Working Group meeting held on 7 September 2021.

The notes were received. Councillors Jackson and Yates requested that their concerns about the scope of the project and geographical area should be included in the next agenda for this Group.

27. GRASS CUTTING AT SPRINGFIELD ROAD

To receive a verbal update on the grass cutting contract (approved June 2021).

The Chief Officer updated members that there had been a number of documents missing when the grass cutting tender was awarded in June 2021.

The Town Council insist that these health and safety related items are received before the contract can be awarded. Unfortunately, despite a number of attempts to receive these items from the proposed contractor, these had not been received. The Chief Officer recommended that this contract went back out to tender.

The Chief Officer wondered whether the content may be re-considered. The tender that had been agreed beforehand was based on the previous specification. The Environment and Climate Change Working Group had now discussed the possibility of carrying out more selective cutting. It may be appropriate to canvas the opinions of the neighbours. It may also be appropriate to add neighbouring areas to this tender.

Councillor Jackson felt it was disappointing that the documentation had not been received. There had been no complaints about the contractor previously. Councillor Jackson queried whether this would mean that the area would not be cut until the Spring. The Chief Officer wondered whether Councillors may wish to ask the Lengthsman to complete a one-off cut in the Autumn to ensure the area was tidy.

Councillors felt this was appropriate. Councillor Jackson felt there was a reputational risk if the Town Council does not publicise that this is not the fault of the Town Council. The Town Council should tell residents what has happened and ask for their views. The best time for tenders is probably at the end of the growing season.

Councillor Yates felt it was appropriate to review the specification in light of climate change issues; a natural meadow could be cut with borders in between. This needs to look as though it is not neglected.

Councillor Sheldon noted this was an area of open space and should be kept that way.

The Chief Officer suggested that this Committee writes to the residents to explain what has happened and to seek their views on maintenance going forward. The outcome of this could be sent to the Environment and Climate Change Working Group, with recommendations back to this Committee. Proposed by Councillor Harper; seconded by Councillor Yates. Agreed.

Councillor Hart asked for proposals to complete a one-off cut by the Lengthsman. Proposed by Councillor Garvey; seconded by Councillor Jones and agreed.

28. POCKET PARK UPDATE

To **receive** an update on the planned completion of the Pocket Park project.

The Chief Officer updated members that the Pocket Park at Dorset Drive was nearing completion. Documents would need to be submitted to central government at the start of November. Planting would take place on 30 October for wetland plants; trees would be sourced from local providers and the Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (SMDC) orchard scheme. The Chief Officer felt it was appropriate to advertise for volunteers via social media. The Lengthsman would clear the area before planting took place.

Councillor Yates was concerned that the orchard trees were not available from SMDC yet.

It was agreed to approve the above actions; proposed by Councillor Harper and seconded by Councillor Yates. Councillor Hart thanked the Chief Officer for her work on this to-date.

29. 93 BUS ALDI ROUTE

To **agree** a proposed route change to the 93 bus to allow access to the Aldi site.

The Chief Officer provided an update in relation to the 93 service, which would be diverted to include the Aldi site. There had been negotiations in relation to the proposed route.

Councillor Lawton had completed extensive research; the proposed timetable was tabled. D&G had confirmed that this seemed reasonable.

The Chief Officer reminded Councillors that the service should be promoted again, and would also go out to tender over the coming months as it was nearing the end of a three-year contract. Staffordshire County Council would support this process.

Councillor Lawton provided an update to Councillors about the buses that serve the Biddulph area and the restrictions that had been proposed by Aldi in

relation to access to the site. His concern had been that there was no undue mileage for the operator. The structure of the service should remain as similar as currently, but with adding the Aldi site. It was also important to consider how shoppers may use the store and when they would like to access a return journey.

Councillor Yates felt that the proposal seemed to be workable; he felt this was excellent work. He would like this to be a commuter service, including a school service.

The Chief Officer confirmed that Staffordshire County Council had suggested that there are two options, which would identify costs for alternative options.

Councillor Rogers wondered whether other services could access the Aldi site; Councillor Lawton noted that there were only eight buses allowed on-site each day.

Councillor Jackson felt this was a good suggestion; integrating the service with the other transport options.

Councillor Jones was concerned that the service could be linked with the rural bus initiative. He proposed that this route should be accepted; seconded by Councillor Hall and agreed.

Councillor Hall extended his thanks to Councillor Lawton for his work on this. Councillor Salt echoed this statement.

Councillor Hart noted that regular users of the 93 bus thought very highly of the service; they had made friends through using the bus. Councillor Jones agreed; this is a 'lifeline'.

The meeting closed at 7.56pm.

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