

MINUTES OF THE CIVIC COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 13 FEBRUARY 2007

PRESENT

Chair: Councillor Hall, the Mayor, Councillors Baddeley, Booth, J Harrison, K Harrison, Hart, Jones, Meredith and Rogers

Also in attendance: Councillor Gibson

67.06 APOLOGIES

Received from the Deputy Mayor and Councillor Jackson.

68. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Rogers declared an interest in Minute 72.06, as his wife is employed by a town centre supermarket.

69. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9 January were signed as a true and correct record.

70. QUALITY COUNCIL STATUS

The next meeting of the Accreditation Panel will be held on 23 May. Members were reminded that meetings to prepare the portfolio will resume on Monday 26 February at 10 am.

Issue No 2 of the Reporter was received and members were asked to help distribute it.

71. TWINNING ANNIVERSARY

The Twinning Association has not yet finalised the proposals and will attend the March meeting of this Committee.

72. REGENERATION

The proposals for the market stalls, sited at the northern end of the High Street, were discussed. It was noted that consultation with the retailers was essential – Councillor Gibson confirmed that this would be done. Members felt that the original plan to hold the market on south High Street would be much more successful than this site and that the original plan should be carried out, regardless of the bus companies' threats to withdraw services on Fridays. The market had always been seen by the Town Council as the forerunner of pedestrianisation of this part of the town.

Councillor Hart reported that the suggestion of developing the transport interchange on the Wharf Road car park was being looked at again. Once the new supermarket development takes place there will be additional car parking spaces in the town centre. Also, the moving of the Library could allow an opportunity to widen that entrance to the car park. This could be the medium term plan, prior to the pedestrianisation of the southern end of High Street. The importance of the central gateway into the town was stressed. It was noted that the reason that the new tables have had to be repaired already was that HGV's are using High Street instead of Meadows Way. It was moved to ask the County Council to introduce a 7.5 tonne weight limit for High Street.

It was moved to write to the Executive to say that the Town Council disagrees with this proposal for the market and that it would prefer the original site at the southern end of the High Street, with the bus interchange and central gateway into the town being developed on the Wharf Road car park. Pedestrianisation of this part of the town centre would then follow. Concern was expressed that, once the supermarket development had taken place, the balance of the town centre would change. This plan would redress the balance.

Councillor Gibson noted that this needs to be decided as soon as possible as the consultation with traders was imminent and it would be foolish to give out incorrect information – retailers do not like uncertainty. Members agreed with this and added that the traders at the southern end of the High Street also needed to be consulted. The fact that some of the business owners are becoming increasingly concerned about their

future in the town centre was raised. It was noted that it was not possible for officers to give out any definite information until the Area Action Plan had been formally adopted by the District Council. Councillor Gibson then read out a letter to the Head of Regeneration from the Biddulph Chamber of Trade, requesting a timetable of all works relating to the town centre.

The Chair thanked Councillor Gibson and Councillor Hart for their input.

73. CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

A local company had sent a letter outlining its proposal and quotation to install Christmas lighting for a three year contract.

This was discussed and it was moved to start the tender process for Christmas 2007 now and to add that the Town Council may consider a contract for a period of up to three years; with a break clause after the first year should the work prove not to be satisfactory.

74. CORRESPONDENCE

It was moved to send a letter of condolences from the Civic Committee to Mrs Gannon, following the recent death of ex-committee member, Mr John Gannon.

The Meeting closed at 6.20 pm.

..... Signed Date