

MINUTES OF THE CIVIC COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 9 OCTOBER 2007

PRESENT

The Mayor, the Deputy Mayor, Councillors Baddeley, Betts, Davies, Hall (Chair), J Harrison, K Harrison, Hart, Shaw, Sheldon and Walley.

Also in attendance: Councillor K Jackson, Mrs Humphreys (Town Centre Co-ordinator), Mrs K Corbishley & Mr K Rose (Biddulph Business Group), DO J Moore (Biddulph Police), Rev A Dawswell (Biddulph Churches Together)

36. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Gibson and Harris, Mr Robinson and Mr F Warwick.

37. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Rogers declared a personal interest in Minute 41.07, as his wife is an employee of a town centre store that will be affected by the AAP.

Councillor Hart declared a personal interest in Minute 41.07 as Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and member of the Regeneration Executive.

Councillor Sheldon declared a personal interest in Minute 41.07 as a member of the Regeneration Executive

Councillor Hall declared an interest in Minute 40.07; as a member of the Rotary Club of Biddulph.

38. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2007 were signed as a true and correct record.

39. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Reverend Dawswell gave an update on the progress of the crib: the figures have been donated; there has been an offer to make the crib by a local joiner and the design has been done by a member of St John's Church. The proposed site was at the top of the steps and secured to the wall, subject to a risk assessment being carried out.

Mrs Humphreys confirmed that the refreshments for volunteers were being jointly arranged by the Business Chamber working alongside the Mayor and Town Administrator. Publicity for the event was to be in the local press and the Biddulph Link.

40. CHRISTMAS LIGHTS AND SWITCH ON EVENT

- a) The led colour changing lamps had been sourced at a much lower cost and had been ordered. New catenary wire had also been ordered.
- b) The actual switching on of the lights was in the hands of the Mayor. Councillor Roberts confirmed that schoolchildren would perform the switch on and that the Business Chamber had arranged for other groups to participate. Reverend Dawswell confirmed that the churches would lead carol singing on the town hall steps. Mrs Corbishley had arranged for a clown and stiltwalkers in Victorian costume to attend. These attractions would perform at all points on the High Street, to encourage a good spread of the crowd. The Chair thanked all for their hard work, which was very much appreciated.
- c) The funfair was discussed and there was mixed feeling on whether the larger rides should attend this year. There are always problems from about 8.30 pm onwards with older children and it was felt that if the rides were not there they would not attend. However, it was pointed out that this would need publicising well or the children would attend and possibly be more of a problem as there would be nothing for them to do. The point was also made that the Town Council should be inclusive of all ages. Divisional Officer Moore said that there were four arrests last year and that the Caught on Camera cctv van would be in attendance. A strict 9 pm closure time was recommended and it was decided that the Administrator would hold a meeting with Mr Warwick Snr and report to the next meeting.
- d) Councillor Shaw reported that the Biddulph Moor tree and crib would be installed on Sunday 25 November, which would leave five days for the tree lights to be fitted.

41. REGENERATION/TOWN CENTRE

a) Councillor Hart reported on the announcement that had been made on 18 September regarding the Sainsbury/St James Securities partnership to develop the new supermarket and associated retail units. The store would be opened in autumn 2009, with between 6 – 8 retail units. The timetable was currently being drawn up by the developers and Dr Wardle was holding meetings/surgeries with the affected businesses. Councillor Hart and the officers were available to talk privately with business owners at any time – everything would be done to make them as comfortable as possible. It would be approximately 10 months prior to any ground work starting. The Executive had requested a presentation by the developers.

The Chairman said that he felt that Sainsbury’s – above all other large supermarket chains – had the best philosophy regarding being part of the town. There would inevitably be problems, but that they would be the best to work with. Members agreed with this opinion. Councillor Hart said that there would be opportunities to view the proposals for the design before the plans were passed. This was the one and only opportunity to regenerate the town centre and it had to be right. Councillor Sheldon had asked that the displaced businesses be housed in the empty premises and warned that it would be inevitable for some businesses to be lost to the town because of the temporary uncertainties. Mr Rose pointed out that there were lessons to learn locally, as Tunstall High Street had suffered from its new shopping development whereas Congleton had benefited. The Town Centre Co-ordinator said that the affected businesses seem much happier now that talks have begun and that they are not neglecting the other business as the whole of the town centre will be affected by the development.

42. LISTING OF FEATURES OF HISTORICAL/SOCIAL IMPORTANCE

A meeting was held recently between Councillors Sheldon and Deane and the Administrator and a fairly comprehensive list of features of interest were drawn up. These were numbered and will be photographed, their condition noted and then marked on a map. Members were asked to note any additions to the list and to let the Administrator have them. A presentation on the condition of these features will be given at a future meeting in order that a bid for restoration work may be made to the Heritage Lottery fund. The Historical and Genealogical Society had been approached.

It was felt that the Moorlands Town Partnership should be approached for help once the listing was complete.

43. REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

A letter concerning the arrangements was received from the Royal British Legion and it was moved to assist with the event by producing the orders of service and providing the refreshments. Rev Lockett had offered the use of the Victoria Centre for the serving of refreshments and this was accepted. DO Moore added that policing arrangements were in hand. The Mayor proposed that the Mercian Regiment be asked to send a Parade Marshall, as we would be without one this year. This was agreed.

The Town Administrator had arranged for the cleaning of the War Memorial and to have Pte Wysoczan’s name added. Councillor K Harrison asked whether the committee had any thoughts on the restoration of the monument and also moving it back onto the grass area. It was felt that this could be incorporated into regeneration work on this area as a gateway feature and it was moved to inform the Regeneration Portfolio holder of this idea.

44. OTHER BUSINESS

Councillor Sheldon reported that Biddulph in Bloom was currently restoring the old cast street name boards on behalf of the District Council. A list of any in need of work was requested.

The Meeting closed at 6.40 pm.

Signed Date