

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 15 JANUARY 2008

PRESENT

The Mayor, the Deputy Mayor, Councillors Adams, Baddeley, Davies, Deane, Deaville, Hall, Harper, Harris, J Harrison, K Harrison, Hart, Jackson, Jones, Redfern, Sheldon.

Also in attendance Councillors Davies, Hart and Redfern.

107.07 APOLOGIES

Apologies were given and reasons accepted by Councillors Betts, Gibson, Shaw and Walley.

108. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Jones declared a personal interest in Minute 113 as a governor at Moor First School.

Councillor Hart declared a private and prejudicial interest in Minute 110, re Estimates/Finance Sub Committee Minute 15a, and left the room during the discussion

109. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2007 were approved and signed.

110. FINANCE/ESTIMATES SUB COMMITTEE

Councillor Jackson congratulated the committee on an excellent job, approving a 30% decrease in the Precept. However, he realized that there may be a big increase next year if projects came forwards and said that in comparative terms the Town Council was dealing with small sums of money. The vast majority of the town was fully supportive. Councillor Jackson complimented the Town Administrator on producing the colourful Budget Chart, which was easily understandable.

The Chair proposed that this Committee formally approved the Minutes of the Finance Committee and the Precept for 2008-9. This was seconded by Councillor Hall and Moved forthwith.

111. TOWN BURIAL GROUND

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2007 were received.

112. LICENCE FOR CIVIL MARRIAGES

Concerns had been raised at the Estimates and Finance sub committee meeting and it was proposed not to renew the licence in April. All were in favour and this was Moved.

113. SCHOOL GOVERNOR VACANCIES

Nomination forms were received for Moor First School and Kingsfield First School. Councillor Hart nominated Councillor Deane as prospective governor at Kingsfield First School, seconded by Councillor J Harrison. This was Moved.

114. CORRESPONDENCE

- a) SPCA Newsletter – December 2007 received.
- b) Congleton Borough Council – consultation on Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper. Details at www.congleton.gov.uk. Any comments requested by 20 March 2008. Received.
- c) West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy Phase Two Revision consultation received. Detail at www.wmra.gov.uk Received.
- d) Questionnaire on the District Council's review of 'locality working' received.

115. MATTERS REFERRED FOR ACTION AND AWAITING RESOLUTION

- a) Councillor Baddeley asked when the Union Flags would be delivered to be flown on the District Council's flagpole? The Town Administrator agreed to consult the District Council's caretaking staff, based at Biddulph Town Hall.

- b. Reference Minute 83.07: Councillor Redfern to urge the Knypersley Residents Association to contact the Town Council directly with reference to a suitable location for a bin. A letter to be written to the District Council requesting that residents are consulted prior to the installation of bins.
- c. Councillor J Harrison to discuss dog bins in St David's Way with the Town Administrator following the meeting this evening.

116. REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS ON MEETINGS ATTENDED IN THE MONTH

- a. Councillor Deaville reported on a recent meeting of the SPCA held in Stafford which she had attended with Councillor Rogers. A very lively long, Christmassy meeting. The one point which she brought from the meeting was that this Council does not yet have Quality Status and we need it. The Mayor responded. She had attended a very lengthy meeting in Stone in June 2006 with Councillor K Harrison, the Town Administrator and the Administrative Assistant, which addressed the application process. As a result the Town Council had agreed to apply for Quality Status. Last summer, the Town Administrator had compiled a huge amount of paperwork, giving lots of time and effort to the process only to find that in the meantime the goal posts had been moved and the application needed to be substantially re-jigged to fit the new criteria. Councillor Hall noted that every Councillor had been invited to attend weekly Quality Council meetings to assist with the application, but very few turned up. The Town Administrator had followed the advice of the SPCA to the letter and produced a very impressive portfolio, but then found that almost everything would have to be changed. The Town Administrator was asked to 'chase up' the application to find how near we are to achieving the qualification.
- b. Councillor Jackson reported on a recent meeting of the Better Staffordshire Moorlands Overview and Scrutiny Panel. Mr Kevin Walton had given a presentation on Credit Unions. It had previously been agreed that Biddulph does not have a large enough population to sustain a Credit Union in its own right. A joint venture between Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, Newcastle Borough Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council had resulted in the employment of Mr Walton as development worker for the Credit Union plan; he had worked for many years for Mercia Police as Credit Union Officer. It was proposed to invite Mr Walton to give a presentation at the February meeting of the General Purposes Committee. This was Moved.

The Mayor thanked the members of the public and press who had attended the meeting.

The meeting closed at 7.52pm

Signed Date