

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 15 AUGUST 2007

PRESENT The Mayor, The Deputy Mayor, Councillors Adams, Baddeley, Betts, Deane, Deaville, Gibson, Hall, Harris, J Harrison, K Harrison, Hart, Jackson, Jones, Shaw, Sheldon and Walley.

Also in attendance Councillors Hart and Redfern.

49.07 APOLOGIES

None were received.

50. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Hart declared a personal interest in Minute 56; he has been lobbied by an applicant
Councillor Hall declared a personal interest in Minute 58a; he is a resident of Mow Lane.

Councillors Deane declared a personal interest in Minute 62; as a close personal friend of the applicant

Councillor Harris declared a personal interest in Minute 62; as he has worked with the applicant to produce the Biddulph Festival brochure.

Councillor Rogers declared a personal interest in Minute 62; as Chair of the Tourism sub-Committee.

51. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2007 were approved and signed.

52. BIG BRUVVER

Alf Wilson (Staffs Moorlands Area Commander, Fire Service) was welcomed to the meeting. He gave a video presentation on recent Big Bruvver video diary work with young people in Biddulph. Cdr Wilson gave a background to the Big Bruvver exercise; the disaffected youth were approached by members of the Youth Service and invited to attend the 'diary room' which was provided by the Staffordshire Fire Service. Several problems were identified, the recurring complaint was the Section 30 initiative, that the young people felt that they were being moved around by the community police into areas where they felt unsafe. Concern was expressed in the Diary Room about the high bus fares into the City Centre and the high cost of accessing the leisure centre facilities. The young people just wanted somewhere to meet where they would be safe and not perceived as a threat to other people.

Members asked what the Police response to this was. Cdr Wilson replied that Chief Superintendent Loxley agreed that thought should be given to the effectiveness of Section 30 policing. It was noticed that on the video, the young people in Cheadle talked about their desire for a skate park, but in Biddulph the children didn't say that they were using ours. Biddulph skatepark is very well used, but not by this group. There is a great opportunity with the redevelopment of the town centre, to provide something specifically to target this group of young people. It was hoped to get ideas from them about what they would like. The Teen Shelter on The Church Road playing fields is not well used, and it was felt that we should ask why.

Cdr Wilson said that different areas have different problems and that there was now an opportunity to ask them what they want, perhaps via a youth forum. They are the future of Biddulph, but the problems are needed to be solved now. They lack self-motivation, and are not prepared to go out and make activities for themselves - it was recognized that this group are not representative of the youth in Biddulph, but they have the potential to cause the biggest problems.

Members commented that people are always criticizing the young folk, but they can't afford what is available. Biddulph Valley Leisure Centre is dearer to use than ever before and the question of why Biddulph Youth Centre is closed at weekend and holidays was asked. There has always been this group of young people who have been a problem. There is a need for something at weekends. It was noted that Biddulph Church has a full time youth worker starting in 2008, who as part of the work programme will engage with all young people on the streets.

Commander Wilson said that he would like a partnership with the Town Council and youth of the town. Biddulph Town Council has a duty under the Crime and Disorder Act to reduce crime. All Councillors were encouraged to go out and find information, to see what is

available and what possibilities there are, particularly at weekends. Members felt that this Council should push very hard to make Biddulph Youth Centre more available to Biddulph youth. It is already there and has the facilities

Commander Wilson will be reporting back to the young people who were filmed, in the near future and will send a copy of the report to this Town Council

It was mentioned that Biddulph used to have a cinema at the Town Hall. The District Council owns Mill Hayes which is not used, Biddulph Youth Centre, Biddulph Valley Leisure Centre and Biddulph Town Hall. This council has been involved with many initiatives in past and will be willing to look at this again. Some things are out of its scope, but the Council could start a dialogue and encourage others to join in. Quick hits might prove effective.

Commander Wilson thanked members for their positive response and promised to come back with the report. His agenda was to stop an arson attack; that of the Council was to help the young people to become involved. Cdr Wilson spoke of an initiative at the Haregate Centre in Leek, which is open on Fridays and Saturdays; two firefighters from Leek attend as volunteers to support the young people. This initiative has resulted in a reduction in youth problems in the area.

It was suggested that some of the young people could be encouraged to attend a meeting of Biddulph Town Council and raise awareness of their situation in the Public Participation forum. One of the Police Community Support Officers in Biddulph had helped to form the Biddulph Youth Theatre Experience (BYTE) and received a very positive response.

The Chair thanked Commander Wilson for attending the meeting.

53. TOWN BURIAL GROUND

Councillor Adams gave a brief report. The Minutes of the meeting held on 20 August 2007 were received.

54. TOURISM SUB COMMITTEE

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9 August 2007 were received.

55. ETHICS AND STANDARDS BRIEFING FOR TOWN/PARISH COUNCILS

The briefing session had been re-arranged for 6.30 pm on 18 September, prior to the meeting of the Town Council (which will be put back to 7.30 pm start).

56. ALLOTMENTS LEASE

Heads of Terms received from the District Council prior to drafting of new lease. Start date to be 1 September and annual rent £325 pa (was £400) to run for 7 years. Legal costs of £50 to be paid by the Town Council. This was approved and it was moved to convene a meeting of the Allotments Sub-committee in the near future.

57. POLLING DISTRICTS/POLLING PLACE REVIEW

Consultation was received from the District Council. The only recommendation in the report is that an alternative to Park Middle School be found as there is no disabled access. It was noted that a pupil at Park Middle is a wheelchair user. It was moved to write to the District Council, with a copy to the County Council, pointing out that it has a legal obligation to provide disabled access to public buildings.

58. CORRESPONDENCE

- a Temporary Road Traffic Order – closure of Mow Lane, between junctions with Congleton Road and Wedgwood Lane, from 20 August until 28 September to allow carriageway reconstruction work. It was noted that flooding is eroding the carriageway
- b Municipal Waste Strategy for 2007 - notification of public consultation received from the County Council, plus summary document and questionnaire. Circulated.

59. MATTERS REFERRED FOR ACTION AND AWAITING RESOLUTION

Councillor Redfern noted that the trough at Whitmore has been damaged, causing water on the highway. It was moved to notify Mr C Drage, conservation officer at the District Council. It was pointed out that the car driver's insurance would cover the cost of the repair.

60. REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS ON MEETINGS ATTENDED IN THE MONTH

Councillor Jackson spoke about the CAB and their financial struggles. A fund raising dinner is to be held at The Monument Restaurant on Monday 8 October 2007, tickets priced at £15 per head will available at the September meeting of the Town Council.

61. CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

It was moved:

'That in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the public and press be temporarily excluded and they are instructed to withdraw.'

Signed Date

The meeting closed at 8.45pm