

MINUTES OF THE TOURISM SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 2 NOVEMBER 2006

PRESENT

Chair: Councillor Rogers, the Deputy Mayor, Councillors Baddeley and Hart, Mesdames Brown, Deane, Sheldon and Rushton, Mr Robinson

35. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None were declared.

36. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from the Mayor, Councillors C Stone, D Stone and Walley, Mesdames R Brown and Waddle, Messrs Cox and Harris.

37. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 28 September 2006 were agreed.

38. MATTERS ARISING (Items from the Minutes and not on this agenda)

30.06: John Robinson had visited Fusignano in October and was appointed as Town Crier of Fusignano. He had sent information to the Chronicle and received very positive response from the Editor for next week's story.

33.06: the Town Council has approved repayment of loss to Mr Robinson.

30.06: the Chronicle has advertised the availability of the calendar, as promised. The Editor was thanked by the Chair and has offered to put the advert in for the next few weeks. Members were very pleased. The calendars are now on sale at Leek Tourist Information Centre. Sales generally are going well. There will be a stall at the Christmas Market to sell calendars, rock and tea towels.

39. BIDDULPH GRANGE GARDEN

Mr Baker had not been able to attend the meeting. Mr Robinson said that during the British Championship, all Criers had been invited for free entrance to Garden and were very appreciative. He would like to thank Paul Baker for this.

It was noted that organised tour visitors to the Garden are not able to come into the town as there is still nowhere for coaches to park in the town centre. The comment was made that Biddulph needs some additional shops to visit first.

40. TOURISM IN CHESHIRE

Ms Brown, Manager of Congleton Tourist Information Centre, was unable to attend the meeting due to illness. Councillor Rogers said that she is very keen to promote Biddulph attractions in Congleton.

41. GENERAL TOURISM MATTERS

Praise was given to the exhibition 'Art at the Arms', which would be open until 12 November. Work was of a very high standard. The purpose of regular exhibitions is to draw people into Biddulph. The comment was made that there is a need for postcards of the town, which could be promoted via the website. It was noted that some Town Councils have a marketing arm and donate profits to their 'In Blooms'.

Various matters that need attention were raised: the WC's on Wharf Road car park had doors vandalised last week and were still not repaired. Ongoing problem – report to Environmental Health.

War Memorial road works are unfinished and the monument looks dirty. It was moved to get it cleaned. The Chair felt that it needed some prevention work to stop further deterioration. Mrs Sheldon said that there are grants available for War Memorials. It was moved to seek advice.

Members felt that the High Street was rapidly going into decline again. There were only two empty shops two years ago, now there are 8 - with more in the pipeline. It was felt that the main reason for these closures was car parking charges. Councillor Hart said that District Councillors were told at the time that there was no alternative to car parking charges and that there was no where else in the UK that was free – this was patently untrue. Only cash-strapped authorities have gone over to pay and display. A lot of people won't park in Biddulph now because of punitive and vicious wardens. The Government has made provision for towns like Biddulph to be exempt from charging but the District Council treats all three towns the same, even though they have different problems.

The Chair reported that the Readers Digest was now out and the article on John Robinson featured – there are several mentions of Biddulph. Congratulations were given to John on now also being the Town Crier of Fusignano.

Members wished to thank Frank Harris for all of his help with Tourism in the last three years. Mrs Sheldon said that part of the role of Leek and Cheadle Town Centre Co-ordinators is developing the In Bloom groups. Councillor Hart is still investigating why more money was spent on Leek's bedding plants than Biddulph's

42. DATES OF NEXT MEETING

To be held on Thursday 25 January 2007 at 7 pm.

The meeting closed at 8.10pm

Signed Date