

## **MINUTES OF THE TOURISM SUB-COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 8 MARCH 2007**

Councillors Baddeley, Hart, Rogers, Mrs Brown, Messrs Daly, Vowles, Harris, Cox, Baker, Robinson and Wheelhouse

### **52. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Mr John Robinson presented Mr Daly and Mr Vowles with a Town Criers Cup, as thanks for their part in the Championship

### **53. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None were declared.

### **54. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Councillors Meredith, C Stone, D Stone and Walley, Mrs Sheldon and Mr Sale.

### **55. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 25 January 2007 were agreed and signed.

### **56. MATTERS ARISING (Items from the Minutes and not on this Agenda)**

- a Mr Baker reported that he has just received a copy of the proposed visitor information panel from the District Council tourism to be sited in the car park. (Circulated)
- b Ms Guest has confirmed that there will be another Biddulph Events leaflet this year and also that there is MTI funding available for the promotion of Biddulph.
- c Mr Cox announced a big event at the town hall – the Oyster Band are drawing people from all over the country. He also drew attention to poor facilities (eg changing) at the Town Hall. K Thacker has arranged to meet with the Leader of the District Council and Head of Property Services to progress this.
- d the new Milestones on Meadows Way were discussed – there is to be some enhancement work (cobble) to the ground around them in the near future.

### **57. BIDDULPH OLD HALL**

The Chair welcomed Mr Daly and Mr Vowles to the meeting. They reported on a major development (which had presented some difficulties) – the chance to acquire part of the Clough (connecting the Hall to the Grange; significant to the integrity of the Yew Walk). Was developed as a walk by the Batemans, a very important link – has fabulous features – tunnel, steps (lost at present). They are to try to excavate these features and restore the bridge. There is also interesting evidence of partial flooding to form a large pond/waterfall. Would have been very exciting walk in the Bateman days; water; rockwork; would have interfaced with the Old Hall ruins.

Otherwise, they have almost (95%) gained Schedule Monument permission to restore the tower (an important symbol of the town). If given permission to renovate (at great cost), the owners wish to gain some benefit by creating rooms - a very small prayer room/chapel. They would like to get this consecrated by both 'sides' – if possible – to bring about an end to the conflict of Catholics and Protestants (who destroyed the building). There would be a proposed room above for reading, and above that viewing room.

Messrs Daly and Vowles would like to move towards being able to open up the Old Hall to the town, but the tower is still in an unsafe condition (they are not even allowed to do running repairs at present). Mr Cox asked whether there was any value in this committee sending a letter to English Heritage? This was agreed. The Old Hall was currently a 'building site', as still undertaking renovation work in the 'Victorian Wing' and uncovering its story. The owners wonder if origin of building was religious, as it is East facing (at a lot of trouble) – possible originally built as Roman Catholic Chapel.

The last avenue of interest is the Biddulph family. The Biddulph's have been in Biddulph, but there are no memorials to them – nothing in St Lawrence's Church records; the only document is the will of John Biddulph (father of Francis). The family are buried at St Lawrence's Church, but there are no records to show this, only two graves in Sussex. This is of tremendous historical interest. The Stonehewers/Stoniers became holders of Lord Camoys title through intermarriage with Mary Biddulph. (The present Lord Camoys is an Equerry to the Queen.)

Mr Harris said that this was fascinating to listen to and would be fabulous publicity - 'The Civil War finishes here!' He is currently getting an event off the ground 'The Gathering of the Biddulphs' on 4/5 August. This will be a day when Biddulph's can bring their family tree along. Messrs Vowles and Daly offered a visit to the Hall. They also have the contact details of Lord Biddulph and thought that he may wish to come along.

Mr Baker suggested posting this in various genealogical websites will give Mr Harris the details (One Name Society). Mr Daly felt that Lord Camoys may also be interested in attending. Mr Vowles also suggested the Middletons of Chirk Castle (were Middleton-Biddulph). Mr Wheelhouse said that there is also a Lord Biddulph in Australia who may be interested in coming over.

Chair thanked Mr Daly and Mr Vowles for attending the meeting and making such an interesting contribution.

*Councillor Hart left the meeting*

**58. PUBLICITY**

Mr Cox pointed out that there is still an A527 board advertising a Leisure Centre event in January. Mrs Thacker to contact the Leisure Centre.

Mr Robinson raised the selling of items in Councils Connect – will we still be able to do this? Mrs Thacker confirmed that this would still be possible. Mr Robinson felt that we should develop some more promotional aids, for example, pennant/car stickers/cups/place mat etc. Mrs Brown had designed some ideas and circulated examples. Marketing could also be done via the website. It was moved to get some costings for the next meeting. Mr Harris said that there was just a year left for MTI funding and it was important to get an application in quickly. Mrs Thacker will contact the Market Towns officer.

**59. CALENDAR**

Calendar 2008: there is to be a garden scenes throughout the seasons theme. Biddulph in Bloom is looking for suitable gardens to photograph. Mr Baker offered their selection, also Messrs Vowles and Daly. Plea to keep this in mind

**60. PROJECTS FOR 2007**

The Chair asked members to bring costings to next meeting. There is a need for a tourism display cabinet in Councils Connect. We could also utilize that in the foyer. Mr Cox felt that it would be good to have merchandise available at events in Town Hall. There was a need for a larger Tourist Information Point

**61. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Thursday 19 April in Councils Connect

The meeting closed at 8.35pm

Signed ..... Date  
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