

MINUTES OF THE CIVIC COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 10 APRIL 2007

PRESENT

Chair: Councillor Hall, the Mayor, The Deputy Mayor, Councillors Baddeley, Booth, J Harrison, K Harrison, Hart, Jackson, Jones, Meredith and Rogers

Also in attendance: Councillor Gibson, Mr and Mrs McNulty of the Twinning Association

83.06 APOLOGIES

None were received.

84. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Rogers declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Minute 88.06, as his wife is an employee of a town centre store that will be affected by the AAP.

85. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2007 were signed as a true and correct record.

86. TWINNING ANNIVERSARY

Mr and Mrs McNulty, Chairman and Secretary of the Twinning Association, were welcomed and invited to address the meeting.

A sub-committee of the Association had been set up to look at the arrangements and it had been suggested to commission a mosaic from Fusignano to be sited at Biddulph town hall. This is being investigated in Fusignano but there are no costings yet and no design had been decided upon. It was reported that there is a mosaic at Horton Village Hall that was by a local ceramic artist. The Administrator said that this artist had arranged to exhibit his work in Fusignano this spring, so there is already a twinning link. Members were in favour of using a local artist, and were in favour of contributing towards the project but had difficulty in agreeing an amount as the costs were not yet known. It was noted that the District Council will need to give permission for the installing of the mosaic. Mr McNulty said that the aim was to get the mosaic in place for October, as this is when the Twinning Charter was signed in 1987. It was moved to support the project and it was understood that costs would be obtained for the next meeting of this committee (12 June).

Mrs McNulty outlined the other Anniversary events that are to take place: the annual Venetian Masked Ball will also have a birthday theme – with a cake and banner; there will be a visit to Fusignano in June and a party of Italians will visit Biddulph in August; the Twinning Associations of Leek and Stone will be invited to Biddulph for an event in October (these towns are twinned with towns very near to Fusignano) and a commemorative scroll with the history of our twinning is to be commissioned.

Mr and Mrs McNulty were thanked for attending the meeting and invited to remain.

87. QUALITY COUNCIL

The third newsletter, containing the Annual Report, is now at the printers and is expected to be delivered later this week. All of the criteria have been met and the application can be submitted to the County Accreditation Panel.

88. TOWN CENTRE/REGENERATION

- a Councillor Proudlove gave a presentation on the Garden Town Framework (a green framework for Biddulph), as endorsed by the Regeneration Executive. The approval

of the Town Council was now being sought and match funding would be requested from the Council and other sources. An application was currently being prepared for £24,000 of MTI funding and a tendering brief for consultants was also being prepared.

Questions were asked regarding the future management of the project – where would the Community Development Trust emerge from? Councillor Proudlove responded that the Steering Group for this was already in place and future Trust members can be any interested party for Biddulph (membership being a £1 share). The projects will start on a small scale, to generate confidence, and will build on this work. This could be very big for Biddulph – the new Town Centre Co-ordinator would certainly be involved, plus Town Council representatives from each ward. The Trust is now called QuinQuinity. The next stage was to gain funding for the consultancy work. It was moved to support the proposal and to await further developments with interest.

- b Councillor Jackson reported that there had been two further project proposals for consideration at the forthcoming meeting of the Executive: floral containers for the High Street by Biddulph in Bloom and a Southern Gateway project by Staffordshire Wildlife Trust. A letter from the County Council giving an update on the work to prevent pooling water in the High Street had been circulated with the agenda. Councillor Jackson gave an outline of the information given to Executive members by the County Council. Regarding the proposed transport interchange at Wharf Road; it was felt that if, subsequently, this were to be moved to the car park the £50,000 cost would be wasted and that it would not be straightforward to put buses onto the car park. The Phase II works are to commence in the near future, and Mr Mason should return from sick leave. The High Street bollards should be replaced shortly and the Town Council has been asked to take the matter of delivery vehicles up with the businesses concerned. Re the slip road from the Inner relief road; this was felt to be too costly and against policy of encouraging traffic away from the town centre.
- c A newly printed Biddulph leaflet was circulated and this was well received. This was part of the Promoting Biddulph project, from the regeneration budget. Members agreed that they would like to see similar leaflets in ongoing production (from the District Council Tourism section) but would like more input towards the content – for example, there was no information on the Trent Head at Biddulph Moor. It was moved to invite the new tourism manager to a future meeting of the Tourism Subcommittee.
- d Signs had been requested at the last meeting. It was moved to remind the County Council of the town centre weight limit signs. It was, however, noted that the posts had gone in for the crossing lights at Oxhey School and a traffic survey had taken place on Woodhouse Lane.

Councillors Hart and Proudlove left the meeting.

89. TOWN HALL CHARGES

The new charge list was received. Session times are unchanged and excess hours (between 10 pm and midnight) still being charged. It was moved to write to the District Council to point out that there is now strong competition in the form of the Victoria Centre and that the hall is already losing trade. If under-used, it would become a large drain on resources.

The Administrator reported that she and Councillor Gibson had met with the Leader of the District Council and the Head of Property Services regarding the theatre proposals and that the meeting had been favourable. The Leader had agreed that the proposals would be put forward for inclusion in the District Council's Corporate Plan and that the costings would be looked at again.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEM – TENDER FOR CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

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.

CONFIDENTIAL

90. CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

One further tender had been received.

Tender A was for £7,190.00 per year, for a three year period (break clause at end of first year)

Tender B was for £3,100

There was insufficient detail included in both tenders to make a decision and it was moved that the Administrator contacts both contractors with several questions, to ensure that a decision may be made.

The Chairman thanked all members for their courtesy and co-operation during the past year and he received thanks from the Committee.

The Meeting closed at 6.15 pm.

..... Signed
..... Date