

## **MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 20 MARCH 2007**

In the absence of Councillor Proudlove, Councillor Adams took the chair.

**PRESENT** The Mayor, Councillors Adams, Baddeley, Booth, Deaville, Gibson, Hall, J Harrison, K Harrison, Hart, Jackson, Jones, Rogers, C Stone, D Stone, Walley. Also attending were Councillors Hart, Meredith, Redfern.

### **126. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were given by The Deputy Mayor, Councillors Brown, Lovatt and Proudlove

### **127. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Hall declared a personal interest in Minute 130, as a member of Biddulph Rotary, leaving the meeting before discussion took place and returning after.

Councillor Jackson declared a personal interest in Minute 136.

### **128. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2007 were agreed and signed.

### **129. NEIGHBOURHOOD AGENTS**

Jill Norman, Chief Officer of Staffordshire Moorlands Community and Voluntary Services, was invited to address the meeting; explaining that the SMCVS is an umbrella organisation for the support of voluntary groups. The SMCVS has a grants officer, plus team, who can give appropriate advice and point to relevant grants.

Ms Norman then explained the work of the newly formed Neighbourhood Agents. They facilitate activity within a specified area and are paid for 40 hours work per month. They aim to encourage public involvement to identify a need and work with the public sector for support, once a group is up and running they move on.

Funding is provided by the County and District Councils - initially for 9 months, but this has been extended to March 2008, the effectiveness will be analysed and further funding may be forthcoming.

Two Neighbourhood agents are based in Biddulph, Sylvia Rushton deals with specific issues in Biddulph East and Joyce Mather looks after the rest of Biddulph – I don't know if this includes Biddulph Moor. They gave a brief account of their actions to date.

Joyce Mather has helped to set up two Residents Associations, one in Brown Lees and the other in Gillow Heath and is assisting them to achieve the goals for their areas and to work as a team. She will also advise about funding and efficient running of meetings.

Sylvia Rushton is working with Re Think and Biddulph in Bloom on a project to 'tidy up' the roundabout at Lawton Street. The group is currently awaiting permission from the County Council to access the land.

She is also working with the recently formed Biddulph Youth Theatre experience. A drama group who run workshops on anything to do with theatre. They hope to stage productions and have received a great deal of interest.

The three were thanked for attending.

### **130. TOWN BURIAL GROUND SUB-COMMITTEE**

Minutes of meeting held on 12 February 2007

Reference Minute 31. The Town Administrator will contact Councillor Locker tomorrow to arrange a meeting to move the project forward.

Reference Minute 32. The advertisement has been placed for the past five months and only one tender has been received. In the interests of public health and safety it was agreed to accept the tender and instruct the contractor to begin the work at the beginning of April

Councillor J Harrison proposed to accept the tender, seconded by Councillor K Harrison. Agreed.

Reference Minute 33b, Biddulph Rotary have asked the District Council for financial help.

In the Garden of Remembrance the 4 strips have been completed, it looks very nice. Several relatives have complained that they are not allowed to stick flowers between the rows, they are to be referred to the Town Burial Ground sub-Committee

### **131. TOURISM SUB-COMMITTEE**

Minutes of meeting held on 8 March 2007

Reference 56c facilities at the Town Hall

Councillor Jackson noted that several years ago the plans were drawn up but no money was available to carry out the work. He advised that officers are currently looking at the plans to see if the extensions are still possible and to bring their observations to the next meeting of the Regeneration Executive Committee. Councillor Jackson will report via the Executive and pass the information to the Tourist Committee.

### **132. BIDDULPH NATIONAL CYCLE ROUTE**

Information received from the County Council that construction work on the section of Route NCN55 at Newpool Road bridge is to commence shortly and is expected to be completed by the end of March. Traffic should be unaffected but access to the Biddulph Valley Way will be closed for the duration of the works

Councillor Meredith reported that the job has been completed and now offers access for wheelchair users and pushchair operators.

### **133. TOWN CENTRE CO-ORDINATOR**

#### **a Formation of the Board**

The Town Administrator gave an update. The management team will follow the format of Leek and Cheadle ie 1 Town Councillor and 1 District Councillor on the Biddulph Board. Names for the representative were put forward. Councillor Rogers was nominated by Councillor Hall, seconded by Councillor Hart. Councillor K Harrison was nominated by Councillor J Harrison and seconded by Councillor Meredith. A vote was held, Councillor Gibson abstained. Councillor K Harrison was elected as Town Council representative until May

#### **b Use of Mayor's Room**

It was agreed that this should be at the discretion of the District Council.

### **134. DECRIMINALISATION OF CAR PARKING**

Councillor Meredith reported that a force of highly trained enforcement officers is on the way to Biddulph, the hand over from Biddulph Police to council employed officers will take place sometime soon.

Councillor Rogers noted that before pay and display there was one empty shop in Biddulph, now there are 12

### **135. DISTRICT COUNCIL FUNDING**

Councillor Baddeley said that this had been covered earlier in the Neighbourhood Agent presentation, but re-iterated that Gillow Heath is a deprived area, no footpaths, no buses, no village hall, no facilities for children.

Councillor Jackson said that Biddulph East is very deprived, but that he will help in any way that he can. As a District Councillor for 12 years he knows 'which buttons to press and which levers to pull'. He feels sure that the area is eligible for help from the Coalfield Regeneration Trust.

Councillor D Stone mentioned that he is a member of the Sports Council and the Arts Council and that this is not publicised enough.

Councillor Hall noted that the swings on the Sandhole playing fields are situated in a dip, this was done originally so as not to annoy the neighbours (he is one) but it is in need of upgrade and better sighting of the equipment.

Councillor Meredith said that Sports groups have to attend the meetings of the Sports Council before they can apply for grants.

Councillor D Stone mentioned the play area strategy which has just been adopted by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, an application to the lottery for funding to upgrade areas and equipment is to be made.

### **136. BIDDULPH LABOUR CLUB**

A petition has been received from members of the Bowling section of Biddulph Working Mens Labour Club and Insitute, expressing concern that the bowling green will be lost during the regeneration process. It is the only bowling green in Biddulph (there is one in Knypersley)

Councillor Gibson's heart goes out to them but he queried if they had made observations at the public exhibition and objections at the Hearing, that was the time and place, it is a bit late now. No, they didn't really think it would happen, so didn't complain, thought would be like by-pass and take 38 years!

The green is owned by the Labour Club, a rumour is circulating that the Club will close in September so the green will go then anyway.

St Lawrence's Recreation Ground was suggested as an alternative site

Councillor D Stone is a past captain of the Bowling Club, he mentioned that the developer in Sandbach paid for the new bowling green in Sandbach, could the green be sited at Biddulph Valley Park?

Councillor J Harrison has been lobbied, and advised lobbyists to contact local Councillors and Dr Parry Wardle, Head of Regeneration at the District Council.

Councillor Hall agreed with sentiment expressed but felt that it would muddy the waters if the Town Council changed the application from Town Burial Ground to Bowling Green when in a delicate stage of negotiation to develop the area.

Councillor Jones reported on a recent meeting of the governors of Woodhouse Middle School where it is expected that the lower end of the playing fields will be sold. He suggested that the Meadows school site would be a suitable place to relocate the Bowling Green.

Councillor Jackson expressed sympathy with the Bowling Club – a club within a club – who own no part of the club or the green. There are 50 members of the bowling club, and 1500 members of the Labour Club, all are losing the facilities.

During discussion of facilities to be included at Biddulph Valley Park, it was felt that at the time there were enough facilities in Biddulph (and Knypersley) and no great clamour for it, but not enough allotment land, so the decision had been made to incorporate this into the plans.

Councillor Gibson suggested that the current putting green could be utilized, or the Meadows site.

Councillor Gibson withdrew his proposal, or did he withdraw from the meeting? I can't remember.

The facility is well used, siting it out of town may result in vandalism

Councillor Rogers proposed that the bowlers are encouraged to hold out for a buy out or relocation to an appropriate site. The letter and petition have been forwarded to Perry Wardle.

Agreed.

**137. CORRESPONDENCE**

- a Street naming – notification that proposal received from developer to name the new road off Smithy Lane 'Anvil Drive' received from the District Council. *Very appropriate.*
- b Notification of a vacancy for a LEA Governor at Moor First School received. *All interested to contact the Town Administrator, before 10 April 2007*

**138. MATTERS REFERRED FOR ACTION AND AWAITING RESOLUTION**

None were mentioned.

**139. REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS ON MEETINGS ATTENDED IN THE MONTH**

Councillor Rogers reminded Councillors of Helen' Webster's leaving do this Wednesday evening.

The meeting closed at 8.35pm

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