

**MINUTES OF THE RECREATION AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE
MEETING, BIDDULPH TOWN COUNCIL
TUESDAY 11 JANUARY 2022, 5.30PM
HELD AT BIDDULPH TOWN HALL, HIGH STREET, BIDDULPH ST8 6AR**

PRESENT:

- **The Mayor:**
Councillor S Rushton
- **Deputy Mayor:**
Councillor J Garvey
- Councillor G S Adams
- Councillor C Brady
- Councillor D A Hall
- Councillor K Harper
- Councillor A H Hart
- Councillor D J Hawley
- Councillor J T Jones
- Councillor K H Jackson
- Councillor A Lawton
- Councillor C R Perkin
- Councillor W Rogers
- Councillor J Salt
- Councillor H M Sheldon MBE
- Councillor N R Yates

IN ATTENDANCE:

- Mrs Sarah M Haydon – Chief Officer (Minute Taker)
- Ms Jodie Hancock – Events and Partnerships Officer
- Ms Esther Gladstone – Finance and Administration Officer

38. APOLOGIES

Apologies were recorded for:

- Councillor E E Baddeley
- Councillor A J McLoughlin
- Councillor C M Smith

39. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

- a) **Disclosable pecuniary interests and dispensations:** Councillor Sheldon declared an interest in any matter relating to Biddulph in Bloom.
- b) **Other interests:** None declared.

40. MINUTES

- a) Minutes of the Recreation and Amenities Committee meeting held on 9 November 2021 were **approved and signed**.
- b) Notes of the Transport Working Group meeting held on 16 November 2021 were **received**.

41. AMBULANCE PROVISION

To **consider** information provided following a second Freedom of Information Act request in relation to ambulance performance in the town (analysis attached).

To **approve** a course of action.

Councillor Garvey thanked Lee Washington for his work on understanding and analysing the information received from West Midland Ambulance Services. Councillor Garvey noted the shift away from Rapid Response Vehicles (RRVs) had meant that the ST8 postcode area had seen a deterioration in response times; the ST1 area had benefitted. Councillor Garvey noted that the RRV provision appeared to be the most appropriate response for most cases in Biddulph. Councillor Garvey proposed that the Chief Officer progress with the actions agreed at the analysis meeting for the ambulance.

The Chief Officer noted that Lee Washington is happy to be named as supporting the Town Council on this matter. She confirmed that the actions recommended:

- putting a piece in the Chronicle and encouraging public response
- working with other Town and Parish Councils across the Staffordshire Moorlands
- approaching the commissioners and West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS) to query why the decision was made to change the service, given the data available.

Councillor Jones also thanked Lee Washington, and said that the data proved beyond doubt that the RRVs were the best approach. He felt that the emergency response service for rural areas was being sacrificed for the benefit of urban areas.

Councillor Salt also proposed writing to the MP, to Mrs Cox (as the Lead Governor of the WMAS) and the Secretary of State regarding the concerns about the proposed changes alongside the data.

Councillor Jackson said that evidence shows that the Ambulance Service was less efficient than before in Biddulph, and public awareness needs to be made of lives being put at risk.

Councillor Rogers said similar frustrations were being experienced among the Ambulance crews.

Councillor Salt asked that data be requested regarding the age of those conveyed to hospital and if they have a recorded disability. She suggested that this may evidence that those from an older age group are being put at greater risk, and this would be in breach of equality legislation.

Councillor Hawley suggested the information should be shared to the Staffordshire Parish Council's Association (SPCA) and other rural parishes in Staffordshire and Staffordshire Moorlands.

Councillor Yates asked that a press statement be prepared. Councillor Harper requested linking in with press statement.

It was agreed that all actions are not a criticism of the ambulance crews themselves. Councillor Jones moved, Councillor Salt seconded to the following actions. All in favour:

- The Chief Officer write to the local MP, Mrs Cox (Governor of West Midlands Ambulance Service) and the Secretary of State / Department of Health and Social Care regarding the proposed changes.
- The Town Council publish the data analysis held on the Ambulance Service in Biddulph and share this information with SPCA and other local councils
- The Chief Officer identify the commissioning team with the Integrated Care Service and write regarding the concerns

42. TREE STRATEGY

*To **approve** the attached Draft Tree Strategy*

The Chief Officer outlined that this was an early draft; further information would be added in relation to longer-term aspirations, young people's involvement, and replanting along the Bateman Walk.

Councillor Garvey suggested that at least three trees should be planted for each tree felled.

Councillor Salt said she would like to see if carbon capture figures could be provided each year to the Town Council.

Councillor Harper and Councillor Yates said that the acquisition of land for tree planting is being considered by the Environment and Climate Change Working Group. Councillor Yates felt there are opportunities for the purchase of low value land in Biddulph.

Councillor Garvey proposed and Councillor Yates seconded that amendments and additions be made and the Tree Strategy be brought back to the next Recreation and Amenities Committee for final approval.

43. BURIAL ISSUES

*To **consider and approve** the attached Burial Policy*

Councillor Harper queried if the Mayor and Chair of the Recreation and Amenities should be included under section 5.3. Councillor Garvey and Councillor Salt felt this was covered within the section.

Councillor Jackson moved, Councillor Salt seconded to approve the policy. All in favour.

*To **note** initial survey responses in relation to Section L*

The Chief Officer gave feedback that out of the 18 people that responded to the contacts made regarding 35 graves, 16 expressed a preference for gravel and 2 requested woodchip and bark. The Chief Officer suggested presenting costed options at the next meeting.

Councillor Yates said that he would like to see trial areas of each grave covering suggested.

Councillor Garvey proposed and Councillor Salt seconded for the Chief Officer to investigate costed options following the survey. All in favour.

*To **consider** tabled options regarding a new Garden of Remembrance-
Woodhouse Lane*

The Chief Officer presented a summary of different Garden of Remembrances, which were visited by herself and a Work Experience placement.

Councillor Salt said she liked the drawing presented, and felt there was room for a statue.

Councillor Hawley asked for clarification regarding how cremated remains would be interred, whether they would be buried in caskets, or poured. The Chief Officer said that at present, cremated remains are in caskets, but different options are available for the site; this could be considered at a later date.

Councillor Jones said he felt that the presented drawing is a good start, but suggested the centre be elevated rather lower, in order to minimise flooding. Councillor Yates said that fixed drainage would be an alternative to elevating the centre.

Councillor Jackson thanked the Work Experience student for her work on the drawings. He asked where the Garden of Remembrance would be sited at Woodhouse Burial Ground.

Councillor Sheldon asked if there was an issue with badgers at Woodhouse Burial Ground. It was confirmed that this isn't a particular issues within this area of the Burial Ground.

Councillor Yates said he would like to see natural areas available for the scattering of ashes alongside a memorial plaque. Councillor Rogers said that this had previously been considered as an option at the bottom of Woodhouse Lane.

Councillor Salt proposed and Councillor Jones seconded that the Chief Officer engage professional services regarding drawings and planning advice.

To consider data on 2021 burials (document to be tabled)

This item was deferred to the February Recreation and Amenities Committee.

44. JOBS FOR LENGTHSMAN (STANDING AGENDA ITEM)

Cllr Yates requested that the hedge where Meadow's Way joins Tunstall Road is cut back.

45. ITEM REQUESTED BY COUNCILLOR JONES- WOODHOUSE LANE, LEEK LANE FEASIBILITY OPTIONS.

To receive feedback regarding proposals and associated costs

Councillor Jones had requested a weight limit on Woodhouse Lane. The response proposed a weight limit of 7.5 tonnes on Woodhouse Lane, Leek Lane and Wraggs Lane. However, the cost is estimated at £50,000. Councillor Jones said that he doesn't feel there is a need to include Wraggs Lane and Leek Lane, but requested support for the weight restrictions on the full extent of Woodhouse Lane.

Councillor Hawley said he wanted to ensure that buses can still use the site. Councillor Hawley suggested that there be a greater explanation regarding the costing.

Councillor Jones proposed and Councillor Garvey seconded that the Town Council write to Staffordshire County Council to request a weight limit be implemented on Woodhouse Lane only.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

In accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, s1, the Council is to determine which items, if any, should be taken with the public excluded.

46. TO CONSIDER A REQUEST TO RELOCATE A BENCH INTO THE TOWN BURIAL GROUND

Councillors viewed a photograph of a bench that required relocation.

Councillor Garvey proposed and Councillor Jones seconded that the Town Council offer to purchase and install a bench, and offer to relocate the plaque off the existing bench.

47. TO CONSIDER LAND OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE TOWN (STANDING AGENDA ITEM)

There were discussions about land in Knypersley, the Bovis Uplands site and the Briarswood estate.

The meeting closed at 9pm.

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