

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 19 SEPTEMBER 2017

PRESENT

The Deputy Mayor – Councillor McGuinness
Councillor Davies
Councillor Hall
Councillor Hart
Councillor Jones
Councillor Lovatt
Councillor Nicosia
Councillor Rogers
Councillor Rushton
Councillor Salt
Councillor Sheldon
Councillor Swift
Councillor Walley
Councillor Whilding

Also in attendance:

Councillor Harper
Councillor Redfern

37.17 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence and reasons accepted were received from:

The Mayor Councillor Wood
Councillor Baddeley
Councillor Court
Councillor Jackson
Councillor Lawson

38. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- a Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Dispensations: Councillor Sheldon in any matters concerning Biddulph in Bloom. Minute 41, Councillor Jones is an employee of West Midlands Ambulance Service
- b Other Disclosable Interests. Councillor Hart in the Local Plan residential site specifics in Biddulph.

39. MINUTES

- a. It was moved to sign the Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 15 August 2017.
- b. It was moved to receive the minutes of the Burial Grounds sub-committee meeting held on 12 September 2017

40. TRANSPORT COORDINATOR UPDATE

Councillor McGuinness gave an update. The County Council survey into subsidised bus provision had closed on the 17 September 2017. He thanked Councillor Salt for raising the profile of the 93 service and to the two ladies who had collected signatures on the bus. Councillor McGuinness had spoken with the County Council network development officer, who stated that as the route had become a high profile item it would be discussed by the full County Council in November. It was emphasised that no action would be taken until April 2018. Councillor McGuinness stressed that the route is not safe; a lot of work had been done, but it would need to continue. He thanked Councillor Lovatt for bringing the matter to the attention of the District Council.

Councillor Salt thanked Councillor McGuinness; she had met with Margaret Jackson, who had gathered 159 paper signatures. 300 individuals had also signed the online petition. Councillor Salt mentioned a lady who used the 93 to visit her husband who was in a care home; if the service was stopped the County Council could be in danger of being accused of denying her a family life.

A letter in support of retaining the 93 service had been sent by Biddulph Doctors. Councillor Salt had forwarded all comments she had received to the County Council.

Councillor Rogers stated that if the service was not used more it would disappear, more people needed to use it.

Councillor Jones disagreed, noting that 12 people used the service regularly from Biddulph Moor, it was a public service and the County Council needed to pay for it. These people were the most vulnerable. He thought it was good news that the decision had been deferred. He agreed that further representations are sent and that we insist that we are included in further discussion. Councillor Jones had sent a 300 name petition to Stafford, which had been available in the shop on Biddulph Moor.

Councillor Hart proposed that the Chief Officer write to the appropriate portfolio holder and insist that this Council is included in future discussions, this was seconded by Councillor Whilding; a vote was taken and this was agreed unanimously.

Councillor Hart thanked Councillor McGuinness for the tremendous amount of work on this. He added that cross-party working had brought results.

Councillor Jones left the meeting before discussion took place on the following item.

41. CONSIDERATION OF POTENTIAL CHANGES TO AMBULANCE PROVISION

Councillor McGuinness noted that there had been many rumours surrounding the rapid response vehicles in Biddulph. Assurances had been given by the West Midlands Ambulance Service the previous year by people who were no longer in position. The ambulance was now based at Princess Street and no longer based at the Leisure Centre; Councillor McGuinness was concerned that Biddulph and Biddulph Moor would no longer have rapid response vehicles.

The Chief Officer gave an update, a reputable source believed that cars were being removed and there would no longer be ambulances in town, except when the crew was signing in and out at the beginning and end of shifts.

Councillor Hall noted that this happened in Leek the previous year, but not here as at that time there was no ambulance station. He was concerned that if the ambulance was attending an incident out of the area, Biddulph would be left without cover which could have a detrimental effect on the town. He believed that this Council should protest and aim to keep the same beneficial service; with rapid response vehicles local to the town.

Councillor Rogers noted that this affects all 20,000 people in Biddulph and wondered how longer the delay would be if you needed an ambulance.

Councillor Hart felt that the Ambulance Service was not accountable to anyone. He proposed that a letter is written to someone at West Midlands Ambulance Service asking them to explain what was going on.

Councillor Salt suggested starting another petition.

Councillor Hall thought that an objection should be made first of all.

Councillor Hart would like someone to come and talk to Councillors.

It was proposed by Councillor Hall and seconded by Councillor Rushton that a letter is written to West Midlands Ambulance Service asking for an explanation of the situation.

Councillor Salt would like to see data on response times.

Councillor Hart would like to see response times over the past 6 months.

Councillor Harper noted that despite assurances with response times, the service had gone downhill. He felt that response times had been amended.

A vote was taken and it was agreed unanimously to write to the Ambulance Service.

Councillor Jones returned to the meeting

42. UPDATE ON SPRINGFIELD ROAD BOULDERS

Photographs of the boulders on the site were circulated.

Feedback had been positive. The Chief Officer would investigate acquiring appropriate signage. 'Owned and cared for by Biddulph Town Council ~ use at your own risk', or something similar.

CHIEF OFFICER'S REPORT

1. Police and Crime Commissioner Updates

We have been advised that the Police and Crime Commissioner is re-visiting the issues surrounding mental health and the impact it is having on policing.

2. 'The future of our libraries'

Please see letter attached.

3. Staffordshire EnviroGrant Scheme

Veolia in partnership with Staffordshire County Council launched the second round of EnviroGrant applications on Monday 4th September 2017.

The EnviroGrant Scheme is a community fund to which not-for-profit local organisations that include charities, voluntary and community groups, forums, sports teams, societies and schools based in Staffordshire can apply.

The following types of projects and schemes will be able to apply to the fund but all applications will be considered:

- Those which contribute to the protection or improvement of the local environment, either via. Practical action or promotion and education
- Those which improve the quality of life for the local community by providing new facilities or improving those already in existence. Groups will be able to apply for grants of up to £1000. Funding for projects with an environmental/green focus are prioritised, however, all applications will be considered on their individual merit.

Contact Hilary Hampton at Veolia on 0203 567 6300 for more information.

Applications close on **Friday 27th October** and awards will be made at the end of November.

4. Responsibilities as a 'riparian land owner'

Please see leaflet attached.

5. Moorlands Radio

We have received a request for a representative from the Town Council to speak on a monthly basis about ongoing project within the town. Volunteers please!

Councillor Hart would be pleased to do this as he had spoken on the radio previously. All agreed.

6. Community Council for Staffordshire- AGM- 3 October 2017

Meeting papers have been received if any Councillor wishes to attend.

Councillor Salt wished to see the information.

The meeting closed at 8.29 pm

Signed Date