

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2015

PRESENT

The Mayor - Councillor Baddeley
The Deputy Mayor - Councillor Salt
Councillor Court
Councillor Davies
Councillor Hall
Councillor Hart
Councillor Jackson
Councillor Jones
Councillor Lawson
Councillor Lovatt
Councillor McGuinness
Councillor Nicosia
Councillor Rushton
Councillor Sheldon
Councillor Swift
Councillor Walley
Councillor Whilding

Also in attendance:
Councillor Rogers
Councillor Harper
Councillor Hawley

61.15. APOLOGIES

None received, all present

62. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- a Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Dispensations: Councillor Hart declared an interest in any matters concerning residential site specifics. At Minute 70a Councillor Hart left the meeting before discussion took place and returned afterwards. Councillor Jones took the Chair in his absence.
- b Other Disclosable Interests: Councillor Sheldon declared in any matters concerning Biddulph in Bloom.

63. MINUTES

It was **Resolved** to sign the Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 20 October 2015.

64. BUS SERVICES/TRANSPORT CO-ORDINATOR

Councillor McGuinness gave a brief report. He had contacted Sharon Bowers at County Council Passenger Transport; she would pass information to and fro. He had met with Mr Adrian Lawton and they intended to carry out a passenger survey on every route in the local area, early in 2016.

Councillor McGuinness would introduce himself to First and D&G customer liaison. Mr Lawton had spreadsheets from 1965 which showed how passenger numbers had declined; the two would work in partnership and would update Council.

Councillor Jackson noted that buses were vital to the area; people were feeling isolated as services were cut.

Councillor Hart commented that this was a good start.

65. TOWN CENTRE STEERING GROUP

The Chief Officer read from notes of the meeting held on 21 October 2015.

Information from County Highways on who could legally park on yellow lines was given: the single yellow line is a day time restriction but this still allows blue badge holders to park for three hours. Double yellow lines and timed parking bays still allow blue badge holders to park for three hours. This blue badge parking can only be stopped by using a 'No Loading' order. However, it was felt that the businesses may not want this as it could affect their deliveries.

All requests for parking restrictions are on the Divisional Highways Programme – the Community Traffic Management Officer will make sure that this is added to the list.

Members said that congestion arose in the High Street when cars were parked on one side and buses were dis-embarking passengers on the other. Councillor Hart suggested a loading bay opposite the bus stop, which would prevent long term parking.

Councillor Lawson reported that the situation had been raised at the District Council to see if funding for improvements could be available through Moorlands Partnership.

Councillor Jones noted that the pavement was very wide adjacent to the bus stop and wondered if a pull-in bus stop could be constructed. Councillor Hart reminded members that the pavement belonged to the owners of the adjacent premises.

Councillor Jackson asked who would enforce illegal parking in the loading bay and was told that this would be parking enforcement.

66. CROSSING AT BIDDULPH ARMS

The Biddulph Valley North Community Association Chair, Mr R Hart, had responded that the residents would prefer a button crossing, but would accept improved illumination at the Biddulph Arms crossing on Congleton Road.

Councillor Lawson passed on the suggestion from the Highway Liaison Committee of illuminated posts and asked if it was the wish of the Council that he go ahead with the order. All were in favour.

67. CLOSURE OF RECYCLING FACILITIES

Councillor Sheldon reported on the closure of the recycling facilities at various locations around the town – saying it was a fait accompli, She and Councillor Redfern had tried hard to retain the facility but failed, they both felt that Biddulph was disadvantaged as there was also no facility for trade waste at the Bemersley Waste and Recycling Centre (BMWC) as at the other Moorlands sites. Councillor Sheldon reported that the textile bin had now gone from the Mill Hayes site but that the area had not been tidied up. She queried where the extra tonnage would go and felt that this would cause extra fly tipping or may be added to already overflowing bins.

The Chair explained that the market for recyclable products had changed – becoming less commercially favourable.

Councillor Rogers was worried that this decision by the District Council could affect the future of BWRC and asked for clarification

Councillor Wood said that he was the Vice Chair of the District Council services Scrutiny Committee which had made the decision, adding that it was the recycling companies whose greed made the project unviable as a business entity. There had been no clarification that BWRC was safe, fly tipping would increase; we must keep the message going to the County Council that we would not just stand by and lose another valuable facility.

Councillor Sheldon clarified that fly tipping could just be of one item citing recent spottings of a bicycle, a cardboard box and a door. She felt that the figures had been manufactured.

Councillor Baddeley added that all the bins had also been removed from the Leisure Centre site. Councillor Lawson admitted that he was confused between the Mill Hayes site and BWRC.

Councillor Jones felt that this Council should do all it could to keep BWRC on the radar.

Councillor Jackson had attended a meeting of BWRC liaison committee (with residents) where he had felt like 'a wildebeest with a pack of hyenas at his feet'. The residents of Stoke on Trent who leaved near to BWRC wanted it to close and he was concerned that he had been unable to obtain a guarantee from the County Council Portfolio Holder that BWRC would be safe from closure in this administration – which only had another couple of years left.

68. BIDDULPH GUIDE

Councillor Rogers - Chair of Tourism Committee - requested that fellow members checked the sheet which had been circulated with the papers, and added anything which had been missed, then pass the sheet to the Chief Officer, before the New Year.

69. HEARING LOOP FOR THE COUNCIL CHAMBER

This item had been requested by Councillor Lovatt who had received a complaint from a resident who attended Town Council meetings and could not hear. Councillor Lovatt proposed that this Council obtained costings and purchased a loop system. The Chief Officer added that she had previously contacted Miss Higgins at SMDC Property Services and would chase the response. This was seconded by Councillor Wood and all were in favour.

70. MEETINGS ATTENDED DURING THE MONTH

Councillor Hart left the room before discussion took place on the following item and Councillor Jones took the Chair.

- a Councillor Hawley reported on two neighbourhood planning workshops: at Biddulph Moor Village Hall and St Lawrence's Church. Both had been well attended. Councillor Hawley reported on the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group meeting held 4 November 2015. Ms Joanne Bagnall - SMDC/HPBC Regeneration

Officer – Environmental Planning at High Peak Borough Council had attended and had explained the process. An application would be made to the District Council to designate the area - all five wards of Biddulph. It had been discussed that a single policy document would be compiled. A 'catch all' workshop would be held on 2 December 2015 from 7.00 pm at Biddulph Town Hall. Councillor Davies reported that a selected sites presentation meeting would be held on 10 December 2015 at the District Council to review the selected sites; he asked if Councillor Hawley would provide a synopsis of information gathered at the workshops, for this meeting. Councillor Hawley said that he would furnish the comments made and the list of where people felt there could be housing.

Councillor Hall noted that a meeting would be held on 14 December 2015 at the District Council for consultation with Town and Parish Councils. The Chief Officer had checked all the comments made on the District Council planning portal by Biddulph residents. Councillor Wood offered thanks to Councillor Hawley and the Chief Officer for the way in which they had conducted the exercise, adding that it had been a lot of hard work. Councillor Jones added that it had been a great benefit to the community. Councillor Wood added that residents had expressed their disappointment to him at the lack of consultation prior to the allocation of sites. He felt that it had been purely a desk top exercise carried out by officers at the District Council. In his opinion there were other sites which would be a better option.

Councillor Hart took back the Chair from Councillor Jones.

- b Councillor Baddeley had attended the workshop at St Lawrence's Church; the Biddulph in Bloom awards; Biddulph Festival AGM; The Gillow Heath Residents Association, where the new Chair had been installed – Mr Rodger Deane, former Councillor and Town Mayor of Biddulph.
- c Councillor McGuinness had attended the public meeting at the Fire Station; it was very informative and well attended, a worthwhile event.
- d Councillor Lawson had attended the Moorlands Partnership with Councillor Hart, where shop front grants and the replacement of railings, taken to make Spitfires and Hurricanes, was discussed; the SACRE (Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education) syllabus meeting; 5-6 meetings of FARS; training days with Anthony Marsh of Midlands Ambulance, who felt that there were far too many Fire Stations.

Councillor Jackson made a point of order, that this item should be linked to meetings which were relevant to Biddulph Town Council. Councillor Lawson apologised.

- e Councillor Sheldon had attended SCAMS awareness, which was very informative and also the Fire Station public meeting.

71. LENGSTHMAN WORK

The Chief Officer reported that she had instructed the contractor to begin the work on the Biddulph Valley Park footpath; he would begin when he could fit it in.

72. CHIEF OFFICER'S REPORT

1 Annual Report – Biddulph in Bloom

A copy of the Annual Report and Examined Accounts for year ended 31 January 2015 has been received.

2 Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association

A copy of the Agenda and Annual Report and Accounts has been received for the Annual Meeting, to be held on Monday 7th December at Staffordshire Place One. The AGM will be addressed by Matthew Ellis, Staffordshire's Police & Crime Commissioner. There are currently four vacancies for the Executive Committee for the Moorlands district.

3 Special Parishes Evening: Moorlands Assembly – 10 December

An invitation has been received to attend a special meeting of the Moorlands Assembly, which will consist of an informal opportunity for networking with other parishes and representatives from a wide range of public sector and voluntary organisations (to be confirmed shortly).

The evening takes place in the One Stop Shop at Moorlands House, where services will have display stands and information, as well as key officers being present for discussion on a one-to-one basis. Festive refreshments will be available.

4 SPCA Chairmanship Training – 14 December

Information received about a further session for Chairmanship skills Training, consisting of:

- The Role of the Chairman
- Preparation for Meetings
- Agenda Management
- The Rules of Procedure
- Professional Conduct / Chairing Standards

Date: Monday 14 December 2015

Time: 7:00pm – 9:00pm

Venue: Rudyard / Trentham Suite, Staffordshire Place One, Tipping Street, Stafford ST16 2LP

Cost: £20.00 for the first delegate, £15.00 for the second and £10.00 for subsequent delegates from the same affiliated council.

5 Grow Moorlands

Information received from Support Staffordshire regarding new social enterprise, Grow Moorlands, which now offers a gardening service. (Grow Moorlands helps people with learning disabilities and mental health problems into employment.)

Councillor Harper announced that Mrs Elaine Rice, Chairperson and Poppy Appeal fundraiser for the Biddulph Royal British Legion had suffered a broken arm. He proposed that a card and bouquet of flower be sent to her from this Council. All were in favour. The Mayor would deliver the gift to Mrs Rice.

The meeting closed at 9.00 pm.

Signed Date