

## **MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE TOWN AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 21 JANUARY 2020**

### **PRESENT**

- The Mayor - Councillor Davies
- Councillor Baddeley
- Councillor Barlow
- Councillor McLoughlin
- Councillor Perkin
- Councillor Rogers
- Councillor Rushton
- Councillor Sheldon
- Councillor Swift
- Councillor Yates

Also, in attendance

- Councillor Hart
- Councillor Hawley

### **71. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from

- The Deputy Mayor – Councillor Jones
- Councillor Brady

### **72. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

- i. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests & Dispensations: Councillor Sheldon anything pertaining to Biddulph in Bloom. Minute 81 Councillor Hart was a member of Enjoy Staffordshire via Peak Park. Minute 84 Councillor Hart was Deputy Chair of the Moorlands Partnership Board. Councillor Sheldon was Chair of Moorlands Partnership Board
- ii. Other Interests: None were declared.

### **73. MINUTES**

- a. The Minutes of the Town and Community Committee meeting held on Tuesday 19 November 2019 were **signed** as an accurate record.

- b. The Notes from the meeting of the Environment and Climate Change Working Group meeting held on 19 November 2019 were received.
- c. The Notes from the meeting of the Christmas Lights Working Group meeting held on 13 November 2019 were **received**.
- d. The Notes of the meeting of the Young Peoples working Group held on 2 December 2019 were received.
- e. The Notes from the Christmas Lights Debrief held on 10 December 2019 were **received**.

Councillor Rogers noted that thoughts and feedback from others had been received. Councillor McLoughlin thanked all the volunteers and Officers who had worked on the day. Councillor Hawley thanked those who had helped at the Biddulph Moor switch on event.

## **FINANCES**

**74.** To consider projects for 2020-21 and budget proposals.

The Chief Officer gave a brief explanation of the tabled document, noting that she had already spoken to Protech about the need to source additional festoons for the 2020 Christmas lights.

Councillor Sheldon felt that the donated Christmas trees should be lit at Christmas time.

Councillor Rogers noted that the Christmas Lights meetings should begin earlier in the year, possibly April or May, so charges could be decided, and new ideas sourced. The Chief Officer felt this was too late to source Christmas items for that year.

Councillor Hart felt that ideas for projects in relation to the Artisan Market should be compiled so that the District Council can be lobbied. The Chief Officer noted that they had a list of ideas in relation to the markets.

Councillor Davies noted that a car event had been provisionally booked for 12 September 2020.

Councillor Hart suggested inviting traders to a meeting at the Town Hall to talk about ideas for the Artisan Market.

Councillor Smith noted that all tables had been sold for the next Ethical Fair which could be held on 29 Feb 2020 between 12 noon and 4.00 pm.

Consideration had been given to utilising other space in and around the Town Hall at future events.

The Chief Officer noted that all market traders are invited to additional events, but many had other commitments.

Councillor Smith asked for clarification about the spending to date on the regeneration for the fountains. The Chief Officer noted that £53,000 had been received from Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (SMDC) to cover the majority of the cost to-date.

Councillor Sheldon suggested that there should be an event in the town linked to gardening and the environment.

## **DEVELOPMENT**

### **75. Station Road update (standing agenda item).**

The Chief Officer reported that the paperwork and payment had been received by Severn Trent and the water for the fountains would be connected in the coming weeks.

The Chief Officer had experienced difficulties with the electricity supply. Western Power had connected power to and installed a connection box, the company which had been approached to provide the electricity to the site from the box had 'de-energised' the box. The Chief Officer had made a formal complaint and was awaiting a resolution.

### **76. To consider identifying Assets of Community Value (note attached).**

The Neighbourhood Plan had looked at important buildings in the town; in order to continue with this work, it would be good to identify buildings which were an asset of community value. The Chief Officer noted that local listings could also identify buildings of interest in the town as important to the community and protect them.

Councillor Sheldon had been listing and taking photographs of some buildings.

Councillor Yates thought that the Crown and Cushion was a good example.

Councillor Hawley asked what the benefit would be. The Chief Officer responded that the Town Council would be involved in what happened in the future.

Councillor Redfern encouraged members to send emails to the Chief Officer with ideas, so there would be a list to go through at a future meeting once we had more understanding of the process.

**77.** Item requested by Councillor Davies- *Biddulph in Bloom has been wonderfully successful in gaining another national gold award and for the second time, being the best in the country in the Large Town category. Biddulph needs to capitalise on this and I propose that a small group is set up to see how this can be best done.*

Councillor Davies felt that this Council should celebrate that the town was very successful in the 'In Bloom' competitions; the gateway signs on the A527 should be amended to reflect the achievement, this was seconded by Councillor Perkin and agreed.

Biddulph in Bloom had a long-term reputation, and this should be capitalised on. The Garden Open Day was one tremendous event. Councillor Davies suggested that a Garden Festival or Fair should be held in the town looking at the wider aspects of gardening. Councillor Baddeley thought this was a very good idea. She noted that Congleton in Bloom achievements were depicted on town centre signage for all to see. Councillor Hart thought a Fair was a brilliant idea, gardening was popular, a Fair would attract specialist traders.

Councillor Sheldon reminded members that the Biddulph in Bloom AGM would be held on 29 January 2020 at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber.

Councillor Davies proposed that a small working group is formed to capitalise on the success. The following expressed interest – Councillors Baddeley, Davies, Rogers, Rushton, Sheldon and Swift.

Councillor Swift added that without volunteers Biddulph in Bloom would not survive. 6-7 June was a national call for volunteers day.

Councillor Smith suggested that the achievement should be advertised at the bottom of Town Council documents and letters.

Councillor Sheldon noted that the A527 signs were quite rusty.

The Chief Officer stated that if this Council took on the management of the building, achievement signs could be located outside the building.

Councillor Yates thought it was a shame that signs could not be placed on the roundabouts, if they were outside this building only those people in town would see them. He noted that the current state of the mining lamps on St John's Road roundabout gave a bad impression.

## **HEALTH**

**78.** To receive an update on social prescribing in the town.

The Chief Officer provided an update. The Social Prescriber had sent information:

*On a daily basis I am at all of the GP practices in Leek and Biddulph. At this present time referrals can only be taken from GP's, Practice Nurses and Advanced Nurse Practitioners.*

***To give you a bit of background this is a definition from NHS England - Social Prescribing Link Workers help to reduce health inequalities by supporting people to unpick complex issues affecting their wellbeing. They enable people to have more control over their lives, develop skills and give their time to others, through involvement in community groups.***

*The main criteria for patients.... (anyone over 18 years old)*

- *who are lonely or isolated*
- *who need support with their mental health (low level)*
- *with one or more long-term conditions*
- *who have complex social needs which affect their health and wellbeing*

*As well as seeing patients in the surgery I am more than happy to do telephone consultations or home visits (if time allows) – I generally have one-hour appointments with patients and then write a social prescription action plan and they take a copy away with them. Any necessary follow up appointments, telephone calls and letters are then arranged.*

A prescriber now works from Biddulph covering Leek and Biddulph and has office space at the Town Hall on Thursday afternoons.

**79.** Item requested by Councillor Yates- To consider the installation of a permanent 'Happy to Chat Bench' sign in the town centre.

Councillor Yates proposed that a permanent sign be installed on a bench outside the Town Hall. He added that the Police Officer who had thought of the scheme had recently been awarded the MBE. Councillor Yates thought that the Chatty bench was a good conversation piece and made people think.

Councillor Rogers asked if staff had noted people sitting on the bench chatting. The Chief Officer could not add any information about this.

Councillor Sheldon noted that the benches belonged to Biddulph in Bloom and many had small memorial plaques.

Councillor Smith proposed that subject to relevant permission, a permanent sign is installed on the bench at the front of the Town Hall, this was seconded by Councillor Barlow and agreed in principle.

Councillor Sheldon, as a matter of courtesy, would seek the permission from Biddulph in Bloom at the AGM the following week.

## **TOURISM**

**80.** To note that display cabinets have arrived in the Town Hall foyer and to consider the sale of tourism merchandise.

The Events and Partnerships Officer was working on a calendar of displays with the Historical Society and Arts Forum; it was hoped to use some of the display space to showcase and sell artisan merchandise and use some space to promote the town.

Councillor Rogers suggested moving one of the foyer flyer stands and replacing it with one of the new cabinets.

Councillor Yates had contacts who could provide short-run printing on tourism items e.g. tea towels.

Councillor Smith suggested the Biddulph in Bloom awards could be displayed.

*Councillor Hart left the room before discussion took place on the following item.*

**81.** To consider Enjoy Staffordshire membership in 2020.

The Chief Officer reported that this Council had been members of Enjoy Staffordshire for the past two years, she was not clear what tangible benefit the membership had made, or noticed any significant impact. The membership had been decreased to silver, which cost £220 + VAT.

Councillor Yates asked the difference in costs and benefits between Gold and Silver membership; the Chief Officer responded that Gold gave the capacity for more images and more social media content.

Councillor Hawley noted that this Council may not see the initial benefit, however if it was not a member, Biddulph would not appear to those searching. Councillor Redfern concurred, he suggested requesting the number of hits, so we would have a measure for the future. This had been requested, but not received.

Councillor Davies noted that this would bring in people from out of town, if we did not advertise, we could not expect results.

Councillor Redfern proposed renewing Silver membership for 2020-21, this was seconded by Councillor Perkin and agreed.

*Councillor Hart returned.*

**82.** Item requested by Councillor Salt- to consider the launch of a 'blue plaque scheme' to recognise the contributions of Biddulph residents.

Councillor Yates proposed that discussion be deferred until Councillor Salt was able to attend. He noted that the blue plaque scheme had been reduced throughout the country.

Councillor Smith noted that the late artist Jack Simcock was born and lived in Biddulph.

Councillor Redfern noted that a building with a blue plaque denoting its history could be quite effective.

Councillor Barlow thought this was a great idea for tourism.

Councillor Sheldon cautioned that more research needed to be done.

Councillor Yates thought it would be good to expand the idea to include notable local landmarks.

Councillor Yates proposed that the idea was worked up, this was seconded by Councillor Smith and agreed.

Councillors Perkin, Rushton and Swift left the meeting.

## **YOUNG PEOPLE**

- 83.** To consider the development of a youth vision for the town (Community Council project).

The Chief Officer reported that the Community Council, which consisted of representatives from James Bateman and Woodhouse Academy, was developing a Young People vision with priorities for the town.

Councillor Hawley thought this was good and should be encouraged to see what they came up with which could then be discussed at the Young People Working Group, with involvement from 'the Zone'.

Councillor Redfern hoped it would not become a wish list, but it was good to have a youth vision if they compiled appropriate ideas.

Councillor Hawley concurred, adding that the Community Council should be encouraged to work on the ideas then in 2-3 months be invited back to



report where they were up to. The ideas could then be reined in or encouraged with appropriate direction.

Councillor Yates suggested looking at forming a link between the Community Council and the Young People Working Group as a reporting mechanism to this committee.

## **RESTORATION**

- 84.** To receive an update on current projects and funding from Moorlands Partnership Board

The Chief Officer reported that

- Work on the Tower Hill Road Well had been completed and grant funding received.
- Refurbishment of the A527 railings had been completed and reimbursement requested.
- Planning permission had been granted for the work on the Overton Road troughs.
- An offer of part-funding had been received for benches at Station Road.
- An offer had been received for part-funding of a noticeboard at Halls Road Playing Fields. The board would advertise community events on one half and have a map showing the location of the town's heritage features.
- An approach had been made to the County Council Highways Officer about further protecting the vinegar trough at Gillow Heath. Protective boulders had been placed either side of the trough, they had recently been damaged by a large vehicle. The suggestion was made to remove the trough to a safer location and replace it with an informative plaque. A project would be worked up for the next financial year to move or protect the trough. Councillor Rogers suggested that the trough is merely moved a few metres back from its present location with larger protective boulders secured at either side.

The Chief Officer encouraged members to consider projects to be put before the Moorlands Partnership Board at its March meeting.

Councillor Yates noted that a precedent had been set to move heritage items; the well at the junction of Fountain Court had been moved when the houses were built.

Councillor Hawley asked if work could be done at Trent Head Well. The Chief Officer had been asked to support a bid by Staffordshire County Council for work on the Well and at Knypersley Reservoir.

Councillor Sheldon noted that lettering on the plaque at the Fountain Court well had faded.

The Chief Officer would work up the list and bring it to a future meeting.

**85.** To consider improvements to the Church Road roundabout.

The Chief Officer had been approached by Blue House Vets which would be relocating to Princess Road (the old Health Centre building) and was keen to help with work on the adjacent roundabout. If nothing else could be done, the Vets would at least like the lamps to be painted and would put pressure on the District Council to make the area nicer.

Councillor Smith noted that she had never seen the lamps lit and felt they should be clearly labelled as some people did not know what they were supposed to represent.

Councillor Yates noted that the majority of the estate adjacent to the roundabout had been built by the National Coal Board, the lamps were a memorial to mining; it would be a sensitive issue if they were removed.

Councillor Sheldon remembered that the lamps were a public art project funded by SRB; she cautioned that before any work was carried out, the structures should be surveyed to make sure that they were still structurally sound.

Councillor Redfern felt that the roundabout was under the ownership of the District Council.

Councillor McLoughlin proposed writing to the District Council to say there was an issue with the lamps which needed fixing and suggesting that a

structural survey is carried out. This was seconded by Councillor Sheldon and agreed.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

- 86.** Item requested by Councillor Yates - To receive an update on flood interventions in the Station Road/ Dorset Drive area.

Councillor Yates reported that work had begun to clear some trees and bushes at the end of Dorset Drive to the southwest of the bridge, the work was being carried out by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council. The walls were in good condition. The Chief Officer had written to Western Power to ask that the area up to and around the substation be maintained as it was now visible to passers-by.

One local business had offered to sponsor planting there. Councillor Yates noted that there was still an issue with a self-set tree in that area. On 10 February 2020 work would start on the pleaching to create natural flood defences at seven sites in Biddulph.

The Chief Officer would work on a press release to give positive publicity for the project as it would look worse before it got better.

## **BUSINESS**

- 87.** Item requested by Councillor Smith - To receive information about the Biddulph Business Chamber banking situation and to consider a way forward.

Councillor Smith reported that she was the current Treasurer of the Biddulph Business Chamber (BBC) having taken on the role on a temporary basis. She would step down as soon as a replacement could be found to alleviate her conflict of interest. Councillor Smith was experiencing problems contacting the second signatory on the account, who no longer worked in the town.

Councillor Smith was considering calling a meeting of the BBC, inviting the previous members and attempting to reinvigorate the group.

Councillor Redfern noted that way to proceed would depend on the wording of the constitution, he wondered if it could it be amended at the meeting to enable access to the bank account.

Councillor Smith proposed that support is given from the Town Council to restart the BBC, in writing to all previous members and inviting them to a meeting to be held at the Town Hall. If the BBC could not be reformed, Councillor Smith would start the process to dissolve the account, this was seconded Councillor Redfern. Agreed.

Councillor Hawley noted that an account set up with a bank cannot have the signatories changed just by changing the constitution. All signatories would have to sign the mandate from the bank.

The meeting closed at 8.29 pm.

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