

**MINUTES** of the **MEETING** of the **GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, 15 Station Road, Stone on **MONDAY 17<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER, 2011.**

**PRESENT:** Councillor P Jones (Chairman) and  
Councillors Mrs J Piggott, G Collier, Mrs M Goodall, Miss A Tomlinson,  
Mrs S Shaw, M Shaw, R Kenney, Mrs J Hood, M Williamson and Mrs C  
Collier

**GP0602      APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors Mrs J Price, Ms J Nelson, Mrs J Farnham, T Jackson, H Brunt and Mrs C Hearing.

**GP0603      TWINNING**

Councillor Mrs J Hood stated that at the General Purpose Committee on 11<sup>th</sup> October, it was agreed that the Twinning Agreement be discussed in a confidential session due to finances being discussed. The Council will be committed to expenses and the Twinning Committee have not submitted accounts. Councillor M Shaw stated that there will be no cost to the Council. Councillor R Kenney agreed that the session should be conducted in private. Councillor G Collier agreed due to finances being discussed, and also the members of the Twinning Committee are known to the Council it may cause embarrassment if they hear the debate.

Councillor Mrs J Hood proposed the debate take place in private which was seconded by Councillor R Kenney. All Members were in favour. Councillor R Kenney proposed this agenda item be moved to the final item for discussion.

**GP0604      NETWORK RAIL**

This item was referred from the General Purposes Meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> October and relates to Minute Number GP0552 on 5<sup>th</sup> July meeting.

Councillor G Collier stated that the drawing shown to the Council on 5<sup>th</sup> July meeting was ludicrous and looked nothing like that available to us now. He went on to say that the proposed footbridge is an eyesore and cannot be allowed to happen. Councillor Mrs M Goodall also said that the footbridge will be a blot on the landscape and she totally disagrees with it.

Councillor Mrs J Hood referred to the survey which has been carried out by Network Rail which shows that 55% of people would prefer the ramped footbridge. She also questioned why Council P Jones attended the meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> August representing Town, County and Borough.

Councillor P Jones responded by saying he had been invited as a County Councillor.

Councillor R Kenney stated that as Ward Councillor he must uphold the thoughts of the local people, and their preferred option is for the ramped footbridge. He went on to say that alterations could be made to the design of the footbridge to accommodate objections regarding size.

Councillor G Collier proposed that the Council do not agree to the footbridge. This was seconded by Councillor Mrs M Goodall. Councillor R Kenney said that Councillors can object to the footbridge but an alternative should be suggested. He suggested that a subway would have less of an impact, but Councillor G Collier stated that subways do not provide a friendly route for pedestrians.

Councillor Mrs J Hood said that Mr James has said he may develop in the field concerned. By agreeing to the footbridge the Council will have some say in what is going there. She also said that 161 people used the crossing on a typical weekday so local people desperately need a safe crossing. The crossing joins two parts of Stone. Councillor R Kenney stated that plans have already been passed to build warehouses on the land on the opposite side.

It was resolved that this Council do not approve of the design. It was agreed that Network Rail be asked for further designs and a consultation period. All were in favour of this.

**GP0605**

#### **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

Councillor P Jones reported that the Department of Communities and Local Government were in a position to be able to give Borough Councils £20k in order to assist Parish Councils in producing a Neighbourhood Plan. The documentation provided shows that Stafford Borough has been reluctant to engage with this. Stone Town Council has been invited to join Eccleshall Parish Council with seeking support from Stafford Borough. The Neighbourhood Plan works alongside the Local Development Framework. The Council will be able to say where the houses go and what they look like, but not how many houses will be built.

Councillor Mrs J Hood declared that she is totally opposed to any building in and around Stone so cannot agree to a scheme to take the Council forward in where to build houses. The Councillors will all be at loggerheads as they will all represent their own wards.

Councillor G Collier stated that two years ago a consultation took place of where the houses were to go, and the agreement was Eccleshall Road. As

we are currently entering another recession, plans that are passed may not be built. A large number are being passed but not built in Stafford currently.

Councillor Mrs M Goodall said we should embrace the Neighbourhood Plan as the Council will then have a say in where the new housing goes. Councillor M Williamson reported that rather than having a consultation, all Councillors views can be collated and then come up with a reasonable resolution.

Councillor R Kenney stated his disappointment that the Council had chosen not to respond to the Local Development Framework.

Councillor P Jones stated that nothing will happen for at least ten years. A few houses here and there will add to the pressure of services but at least the Council will have a say in what happens.

Councillor Mrs J Hood stated that £20k shared between Stone, Eccleshall, Chebsey and Gnosall will not go very far and it will not be enough to make a comprehensive plan.

It was agreed that Stone join with Eccleshall to seek support from Stafford Borough.

**GP0606**

**Resolved:**

**Pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the Public and Press be excluded from the meeting whilst the next item of business is discussed on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the debate.**

**TOWN MAYOR**