



**Introduction**

This document was prepared for consideration at the Finance Strategy and Management Committee meeting in November 2021, for approval by Town Council in January 2022.

Biddulph Town Council prepares an annual action plan in May/ June each year to ensure that decision-making is transparent, and priorities are appropriately resourced. Following an unprecedented year in 2020-21, the Town Council made good progress with the actions that had been agreed, but also noted that there were some areas where additional input was needed in 2021-22. These items have been carried forward into this action plan.

The priorities are attached to standing Committees, but may be delegated to Working Groups.

(TCC- Town and Community Committee, RAC- Recreation and Amenities Committee, FSM- Finance Strategy and Management Committee, PC- Planning Committee, EMR- earmarked reserves)

No.	Aim	Key Task	Funding allocated	November 2021 review
<p><b>Town and Community Committee</b>  <b>Overall Strategic Objectives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote opportunities for economic success of the area, working with High Street traders and businesses.</li> <li>• Work to become greener in our activities, lobbying those who have key responsibilities for improvements and supporting our communities.</li> <li>• Signpost and inform residents and visitors, guiding them through the range of services available to them.</li> <li>• Improve safety and reduce anti-social behaviour</li> <li>• Improve the wellbeing of the people of Biddulph.</li> </ul>				
1	Provide Support and Information to Town Centre traders	a) Communicate the priorities identified in the Regeneration Plan to ensure priorities are reflective of public opinion. b) Be business-friendly. We will investigate: digital connectivity/ Wi-Fi hotspots; Business Improvement Districts; ‘Buy Local’ schemes; options for embryo and pop-up businesses; and, lobby to provide support with business rates. c) Ensure ‘Welcome Back Funding’ is spent on appropriate initiatives to encourage the community to feel confident in the town centre, post- covid. d) Work to establish a traders forum. We appreciate that business owners in the town have a wealth of valuable experience to support these proposals. e) Consideration of a shop front grant scheme in line with the Neighbourhood Development Order.	EMR- Neighbourhood Plan Implementation (£160,000) General Fund- Regeneration budget (£8,000) Welcome Back funding- ERDF (£18,450)	The priority during this period has been Welcome Back funding, enhancing the town centre through additional resources.  Town and Community Committee re-visited the idea of establishing a traders group; to be organised for January 2022.  NDO currently at Examination stage.

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2	Enhancement of partnerships within the town	Continue to work on Biddulph Network, Dementia action plan, Tree Charter actions, collaborate with Friends Groups, health and mental health partners and support for the voluntary sector.	Dedicated support through Events and Partnerships Officer. General Fund budgets allocated for Dementia Action Plan (£800) and grants scheme (£74,000)	100 new Dementia Friends. Dementia Friendly cinema resumed. Ancient/ Veteran Tree training undertaken by local volunteers. Continued support for health colleague.
3	Consider public realm improvements in the town centre, to enhance the appeal of the town for visitors and the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Consider pedestrianisation of the town centre and/ or a 'flexible event space' following further consultation. This will necessitate the development of town centre improvement programmes that attract grant funding.</li> <li>b) Work with Amey and Staffordshire County Council to identify public realm improvements that are both easily achievable and aspirational.</li> <li>c) Promote Artisan Market and Fresh Food Friday and consider appropriate improvements.</li> <li>d) Ensure that enhancements to public realm within the town centre link to surrounding green spaces.</li> </ul>	EMR- Neighbourhood Plan implementation (£160,000) EMR- Highways Development (£50,000) General Fund- Regeneration (£8,000)	Amey project progressing. Artisan Market re-established. Town and Community Committee to receive recommendations January 2022. Dorset Drive (providing connectivity with town centre) to be completed 5 December.
4	Understand who uses our town and when the peak usage times are.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Invest in footfall analysis; understand the anchors and enhance the 'offer'.</li> <li>b) Enhance signage to ensure visitors are directed to key areas of the town.</li> </ul>	EMR- Neighbourhood Plan implementation (£160,000) EMR- Highways Development (£50,000) General Fund- Regeneration (£8,000)	Footfall part of Welcome Back funding. Welcome to Biddulph signage approved.
5	Work with key enforcement agencies to tackle anti-social behaviour within then town.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Ensure that CCTV provision within the town provides a deterrent for damage to public assets</li> <li>b) Continue to ensure that the relationship with the Police is positive and supportive.</li> </ul>	EMR- Projects (£50,000)	CCTV installed by SMDC; new CCTV outside Town Hall. Considering additional provision at Station Road. Police started drop-ins to coincide with Town Council meetings.
6	Implement actions from the Environment and Climate Change Working Group, delivering key environmental improvements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Engage with national projects such as the Refill scheme.</li> <li>b) Enhance open spaces and biodiversity.</li> <li>c) Explore options to undertake additional mapping with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust</li> <li>d) Enhance reputation of 'Garden Town of Staffordshire'</li> <li>e) Improve flood risk areas</li> <li>f) Create safe links and spaces within the town, focusing on the needs of cyclists and walkers in the area.</li> </ul>	EMR- Environment and Climate Change (5,000) EMR- Projects (£50,000)	Signed up for Refill scheme; information received. SWT information received for mapping; working to enhance green space at Country Park. Suite of leaflets produced to promote town. Work commenced to develop new cycle routes.

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7	Complete restoration projects and protection of heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Establish a 'local listing' process that takes into consideration our community assets and heritage features.</li> <li>b) Work to enhance, restore and improve these assets, where possible.</li> <li>c) Deliver MPB projects and identify other options.</li> <li>d) Restoration of war memorial.</li> </ul>	General Fund- Regeneration (£8,000) EMR- Projects (£50,000)	Work commenced on local listings and community assets. Discussions commenced about regeneration of 'Albert' in time for April 2022 centenary.
8	Enhance arts and culture in the town.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Work with creative and artistic communities to support and showcase the incredible talent within our community, promoting festivals and community events.</li> <li>b) Work with partners to apply for grant funding to support new and emerging projects that will increase access to arts within the town.</li> <li>c) Increase opportunities to engage in art and cultural activities.</li> </ul>	EMR- Projects (£50,000) General Fund- New Events (£2,000)	New tenants at Visitor Centre will create artists 'hub'.
9	Enhance tourism opportunities within the town, increasing the number of people that visit the town and choose to spend time here.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Create opportunities for attractions to promote their offer within Biddulph Town Hall.</li> <li>b) Endeavour to retain visitors from Biddulph Grange, attracting them into the town.</li> <li>c) Explore opportunities at Biddulph Grange Visitor Centre.</li> <li>d) Print and distribute Biddulph map</li> <li>e) Improvements to <a href="http://www.biddulph.co.uk">www.biddulph.co.uk</a> website</li> <li>f) Improved signage in and around the town.</li> <li>g) Support for walking and Ramblers initiatives.</li> <li>h) Consider membership of Enjoy Staffordshire.</li> </ul>	EMR- Tourism enhancements (£5,000) General Fund- Tourism (£2,000)	Suite of promotional leaflets created. Hideaway café opened in August 2021. Website content reviewed and improved.
10	Improve health and wellbeing opportunities for residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Enhancements to cycling provision within the town.</li> <li>b) Pursue the installation of a Changing Places facility within the town centre (including shower facilities for cyclists).</li> <li>c) Commence phase 2 of the Station Road community garden, ensuring license/ lease arrangements are in place with SMDC.</li> <li>d) Provide opportunities to purchase fresh seasonal food through markets and events, which also promote existing town centre traders.</li> <li>e) Ensure appropriate management arrangements are in place for fountains.</li> </ul>	EMR- Projects (£50,000) General Fund- New Events (£2,000) EMR- Development of Station Road project (£50,000).	New cycling routes considered through Environment and Climate Change Working Group. Fountain maintenance under review.
11	Continue to lead and develop community events, providing and encouraging volunteering opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Continue to work on events such as the Biddulph Festival, Christmas Lights, Volunteer events, heritage celebrations, etc.</li> <li>b) Lead town with Ceremonial occasions.</li> <li>c) Identify new opportunities to promote the town centre, e.g. the Classic Vehicle Event.</li> </ul>	General Fund budgets allocated for Events (£2,000), Tourism (£2,000) and Christmas Lights (£26,000). Grants scheme	Events completed- Classic Vehicle, Remembrance Sunday, Civic Sunday/ Standard dedication,

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			available for local organisations (£74,000). EMR- Tourism enhancements (£5,000)	Christmas lights switch-on imminent. Garden Festival planned for 2022.
12	Provide services and support for young people	a) Work with Community Council to develop a youth vision. b) Work with Biddulph Youth and Community Zone to establish the effectiveness of a detached youth worker scheme/ disco. c) Facilitate Young People's Working Group. d) Work with School's Learners Forum e) Support 'Staged' youth theatre project. f) Consider enhancements of play opportunities and youth facilities.	EMR- Projects (£50,000), youth facilities (£3,000)	Young People's Working Group re-started. FSM Committee to consider detached youth work trial. Worked with Knypersley Community Kids. Trained 100 Year 7 young people at Woodhouse Academy. Working with SWT to develop play opportunities at Country Park.
13	Develop innovative and imaginative uses for the Bus Hub	a) Work with communities to develop ad hoc exhibition and event space b) Work with Young People's Working Group to identify detached youth work opportunities	EMR- Town Hall (and Toilet Blocks) Development (£60,000)	Festival beach hut project complete; grotto to be installed imminently.
<b>Finance Strategy and Management Committee</b> <b>Overall Strategic Objectives:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oversee the strategic direction of the Town Council.</li> <li>Manage the Council's assets and resources responsibly and transparently.</li> <li>Be an exemplar of Local Government.</li> </ul>				
14	Management of Community Facilities	a) Consider future investment in the Town Hall and promotion of the asset. b) Ensure there is a clear role for Biddulph Town Hall, Biddulph Grange Country Park Visitor Centre and the public convenience buildings within the town centre c) Effective management of health and safety, including statutory testing. d) Ensure appropriate management of tenancies and new opportunities for tenant creation.	EMR- Town Hall (and toilet block) Development (£60,000) EMR- Projects (£50,000)	Significant improvements to Town Hall usage. Health and Safety an improving picture across all assets. All tenancies developed with support of solicitors.
15	Ensure GDPR Compliance	a) Implementation and monitoring of Confidentiality and Information Management Policy. b) Consideration of working with a Data Protection Officer from Staffordshire County Council.	General Fund- Office Costs (£200)	Revised policy approved. IT Working Group approved Councillor emails.

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		c) IT Working Group to determine need for Councillor email addresses and specific Town Council IT equipment.		
16	Continuous monitoring of Asset Register	a) Effective monitoring of fixed assets and Town Council owned property. b) Develop process for appropriate disposal of assets	General Fund- Office Costs (£200)	Asset Register reviewed. New process in place for disposing of assets.
17	Regular review of policies	a) Ensure Town Council is operating legally and with transparency. b) Solicitor instructed to provide employment advice on retainer basis. c) Development of Business Continuity Plan and Emergency Planning document, providing strategies for dealing with future possible outbreaks.	Chief Officer responsibility General Fund- Office Costs (£200)	Local Council Award Scheme criteria completed. All policies reviewed. Solicitor arrangement in place. Drafts of BCP and Emergency Plan emerging.
18	Administer community-led grants scheme	a) Provide support for local organisations through the main grant fund and the Town Councillors' Community Grant fund. b) Ensure evaluation takes place in robust manner to provide feedback on impact of grant process.	General Fund- Grants (£74,000)	Grants programmes in place; allocations thoroughly reviewed.
19	Effective management of risk	a) Continue to review and assess risk, to be reported to Council annually. b) Ensure appropriate insurance cover for new and emerging asset management.	General Fund- Training (£2,000)	Risk management ongoing; new process in place for managing events.
20	Consideration of investments and use of earmarked reserves.	a) To keep income and expenditure under review b) To invest reserves in low-risk financial services.	FSM Committee to lead.	Regular review through FSM Committee. Opportunities identified for investment.
<b>Recreation and Amenities Committee</b> <b>Overall Strategic Objectives:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage the Council's operational services effectively to meet the needs to the communities we serve.</li> <li>• Strive for continuous improvement, lobbying partners to make improvements to assets within the town.</li> </ul>				
21	Effective provision of Lengthsman activities	Ongoing review of Lengthsman scheme including consideration of wider grass cutting activities.	General Fund- Lengthsman (£8,000)	Lengthsman contract renewed. Springfield Road grass cutting to be revisited following unsuccessful tender process.

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22	Biddulph Grange Country Park Visitor Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Ensure building is fit for purpose and well maintained.</li> <li>b) Work with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust to extend the area of responsibility and also to develop events collaboratively with the Friends Group.</li> <li>c) Consider the financial viability of the building beyond 2021.</li> </ul>	EMR- Biddulph Grange Country Park Visitor Centre refurbishment (£20,000)	Visitor Centre redeveloped; café open. Discussions commenced in relation to new play area.
23	Improvement of Highways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Work with SCC to improve parking on North High Street; consider bollards in alley off John Street.</li> <li>b) To consider speed and use of town centre highways roads, in partnership with Amey and Staffordshire County Council.</li> <li>c) Install new signage at entrance of Biddulph</li> </ul>	EMR- Highways Developments (£50,000) General Fund- Regeneration (£8,000)	North High Street project commenced. Amey project ongoing. Welcome to Biddulph Signage ordered.
24	Development of Allotments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Continue to look for development opportunities, particularly Shepherd/ Slater Street.</li> <li>b) Work with existing sites to ensure sites managed appropriately.</li> </ul>	General Fund- Allotments (£2,000)	Site management ongoing.
25	Maintain and monitor footpaths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Work with Ramblers to identify issues and resolve these via Staffordshire County Council.</li> <li>b) Identify small improvements that are possible with BTC funding.</li> <li>c) Lengthsman to keep some town footpaths clear of debris and overgrown vegetation.</li> </ul>	General Fund- Footpaths (£1,000) General Fund- Lengthsman (£8,000)	Lengthsman work continuing.
26	Effective management of Burial Grounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) To keep in obedience introduction of Exclusive Rights of Burial</li> <li>b) Improvements to drainage in Section C</li> <li>c) Resurface footpaths in Section M and C</li> <li>d) Re-visit tree planting priorities</li> <li>e) Introduce Memorial Testing</li> <li>f) New row to be installed in Garden of Remembrance</li> <li>g) Clarify ideas around new Garden of Remembrance development</li> </ul>	General Fund- Burial Grounds (£30,000) EMR- Future burial area, GOR development (£117,000)	Burial Policy reviewed- draft to be considered in January 2022. GOR new row complete.
27	Effective maintenance of Town Council Open Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Ensure riparian duties at Butterfly Gardens are undertaken</li> <li>b) Develop proposals for grass cutting that finds an appropriate balance between improving biodiversity and ensuring areas are 'tidy'</li> <li>c) Complete Pocket Park and identify new areas for improvement.</li> <li>d) Develop Tree Planting Strategy</li> <li>e) Identify training on ancient and veteran trees.</li> </ul>	General Fund- Butterfly Garden (£1,000), Maintenance of Springfield Road (£1,000) EMR- Projects (£50,000)	Pocket Park complete 5 December. Tree Strategy emerging. Training complete in relation to ancient and veteran trees.
28	Improvement of transport options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Management and monitoring of 93 bus service.</li> <li>b) Active Working Group tackling range of public transport issues, including innovative approaches to working with schools at peak times.</li> <li>c) Consider improvements to transport and infrastructure within the town centre, focusing on bus and taxi services.</li> </ul>	General Fund- 93 Bus (£40,000) EMR- Highways Development (£50,000)	93 bus diverted to include Aldi site. Working Group considering range of transport issues.

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				Community Officer developing taxi scheme to enhance community activity.
<b>Planning Committee</b> <b>Overall Strategic Objectives:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Represent residents on key planning and strategic issues</li> </ul>				
29	Provide timely responses to Planning applications	a) To ensure that responses to Planning applications are transparent and consistent. b) Work with SMDC to develop training opportunities.	Planning Committee to lead.	Training received on implementing the Neighbourhood Plan; new approach adopted to responding to planning applications.
30	To develop/ implement the Neighbourhood Plan	Support SMDC plan for consultation and examination of the Neighbourhood Plan and Neighbourhood Development Order; referendum planned for Autumn 2021.	Planning Committee to lead.	Examination process commenced; referendum anticipated Spring 2022.