

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
BIDDULPH TOWN COUNCIL
TUESDAY 12 MARCH 2024, 6PM
HELD AT BIDDULPH TOWN HALL, HIGH STREET, BIDDULPH ST8 6AR**

PRESENT:

- **Mayor**
Councillor K Harper (Chair)
- **Deputy Mayor**
Councillor N R Yates
- Councillor C Brady
- Councillor N Eardley
- Councillor S Fletcher
- Councillor J I M Garvey
- Councillor D Hawley
- Councillor F A Holdsworth
- Councillor M A Hopkins
- Councillor K J Jackson
- Councillor J T Jones
- Councillor C Kisicki
- Councillor A C Lawton
- Councillor A Parkes
- Councillor J Redfern
- Councillor W Rogers
- Councillor J Salt
- Councillor C Smith

IN ATTENDANCE:

- Mrs Sarah M Haydon – Chief Officer (Minute Taker)
- Mrs Margaret Warman – Compliance and Governance Officer
- Ms Jodie Hannock – Events and Partnership Officer
- Mrs Angela Williams – Administration Officer
- Councillor Keith Flunder – Staffordshire Moorlands County Councillor
- Pastor Mark Holdcroft -
- Mary Freeland – Connect Fibre Representative
- Ryan Pullin - Biddulph in Bloom Representative/s
- Lesley Drumm - Biddulph in Bloom Representative/s

Councillor Rogers introduced the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and the Chief Officer.

Pastor Holdcroft led the Town Council in Prayer.

Councillor Yates recited the disclaimer regarding the recording of the meeting.

The Mayor confirmed attendees will be named in the minutes, unless otherwise instructed.

95. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mary Freeland- Connect Fibre (five minutes)

Mary Freeland gave a presentation regarding the upcoming work to be completed in Knypersley in relation to full fibre broadband which is fast and reliable for rural areas. Ms Freeland stated that funding has been received to provide this service to the areas that require it most.

Councillor Redfern questioned the disruption of the footpaths and which households will be targeted. Ms Freeland explained that properties have registered their interest or have been identified by the government.

Biddulph in Bloom- the development of a Community Garden (five minutes)

Ryan Pullin and Lesley Drumm from Biddulph in Bloom tabled the proposed plans and presented photos of the intended garden, in memory of Hilda Sheldon.

Councillor Harper proposed to refer this issue to a future Finance Strategy and Management Committee meeting to discuss the plans in more detail; seconded by Councillor Yates. All **agreed.**

Biddulph in Bloom representatives left the meeting at 6.40pm

Regular attendees:

Staffordshire Police (five minutes)

The Chief Officer gave apologies on behalf of the PCSO's as they were called to an incident.

Councillor Jones would like to formally give thanks to the PCSOs involved in the incident last week, where they saved a man's life.

It was suggested that a complaint should be made to the ambulance service, this had already been completed by the Chief Officer; the response would be received at a Recreation and Amenities Committee meeting.

The Chief Officer stated that she would report back any questions to the Police. There were no questions.

Staffordshire County Council representative(s): (five minutes total)

Councillor Flunder

Councillor Flunder gave updates in relation to the Family Improvement Board, an adult learning week which includes budgeting, and information about children's holiday activities.

Councillor Flunder stated that he had attended a Repair Café and was impressed with the work and thought it was a great idea.

Councillor Flunder reported that he had been helping out with Biddulph Youth and Community Zone, with ideas of applying for grants. He stated that there are issues with the cost of fuel therefore they are looking at the use of solar panels on the roof. Councillor Flunder stated that there is good news on the repairs, which have been undertaken this past week.

Councillor Flunder reported that the 4.9% council tax increase for the County Council has been agreed, which was confirmed at the last council meeting.

Councillor Flunder stated that he has met with Knypersley fishing club and it has been confirmed that a consultation will take place this summer.

Councillor Yates

Councillor Yates reported that the monitoring cameras have been in place at the Zebra Crossing near the Biddulph Arms, these were part of the road survey as the aspiration is to have a Pelican or Toucan crossing instead. Councillor Yates stated that the cameras were also put on Halls Road to look at the types of traffic management which could increase road safety in that area. He is hoping to receive this report back in April 2024.

Councillor Yates stated that for anyone who would like a copy, he had printed the schedule for pothole works to be completed.

Councillor Yates noted that Staffordshire County Council are working on a local transport plan which will be run from 2025 to 2030. He urges Biddulph residents to complete the survey at the bottom of the website and give their opinions. The Chief Officer will circulate the website link.

Councillor Garvey reported that the consultation period for the above local transport plan would be during October 2024 to December 2024. Councillor Garvey reported due to the County Council not attending a recent meeting with the District Council to discuss this matter, the District Council have registered their dissatisfaction with the early stages of the development of the transport strategy.

APOLOGIES

To receive apologies and approve reasons for absence.

- Councillor A H Hart
- Councillor D Proudlove (Absent)
- Councillor Wood
- Councillor S Rushton (Absent)

Mary Freeland left the meeting at 6.58pm.

It was agreed that a card be sent to Councillor Rushton on behalf of the Town Council to wish her a speedy recovery.

96. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

a) To declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests & Dispensations:

Councillor Rogers declared an interest in Item 106: expenses.

b) To declare any Other Disclosable Interests: None.

97. MINUTES

a) To **approve and sign** the Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on Tuesday 13 February 2024

Proposed by Councillor Jackson; seconded by Councillor Garvey. All **agreed**.

It was proposed by Councillor Jackson that the minutes be recited by item number only and not the full heading; seconded by Councillor Harper. All **agreed**.

b) To **receive** the Minutes from the Recreation and Amenities Committee meeting held on Tuesday 13 February 2024

Proposed by Councillor Redfern; seconded by Councillor Garvey. All **agreed**.

c) To **receive** the Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on Tuesday 20 February 2024

Proposed by Councillor Hawley; seconded by Councillor Garvey. All **agreed**.

d) To **receive** the Minutes of the Town and Community Committee meeting held on Tuesday 20 February 2024

Proposed by Councillor Garvey; seconded by Councillor Jones. All **agreed**.

98. MAYORS COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor reported that he had attended an event in Leek. The Mayor stated that the Biddulph Male Voice Choir will be performing on the 6th April at Biddulph Town Hall.

The Mayor reported that the Knypersley fun run took place at the weekend, with an over 200 people in attendance. The Mayor gave thanks to Biddulph Running Club and others for organising the event.

99. STANDING AGENDA ITEMS:

Councillors to note that these are existing standing agenda items and can be amended by resolution, if required.

- a) To **receive** an update on the management of Town Council Assets

The Chief Officer reported that a number of licenses/ leases and agreements are still outstanding, the delay is due to the legal team not the assets team at Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.

The Chief Officer reported that the previously agreed fire door changes will be completed by the end of the week.

Councillor Smith questioned about the visitor centre. The Chief Officer explained that is included in the above-mentioned list of outstanding leases.

- b) To **receive** an update on health and safety activities (inc. risk management)

Councillor Salt questioned whether there had been any further communications in relation to RAAC.

The Chief Officer confirmed that the fire risk assessment was completed on 1st March. It was discussed that a health and safety walk around of the sites had been completed by Officers and Councillor Holdsworth. A process has been added to review serious incidents.

Councillor Holdsworth commended the staff on the way they handled and diffused the recent incident.

- c) To **receive** an update on 'Biddulph Works Together' project.

The Chief Officer reported that several community groups are continuing there activities throughout the summer months. The Chief Officer reported that the Biddulph Library would like to trial a new group and requested funds from the project; there was still funding available for this.

100. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON OUTSIDE BODY MEETINGS ATTENDED SINCE THE JANUARY 2024 MEETING (Updates only from the following meetings: Biddulph in Bloom, Moorlands Assembly, Staffordshire Parish Councils Association, Moorlands Partnership Board, Twinning Association and Fairtrade)

Councillor Rogers reported that the Parish Assembly meeting had received presentations and stated that the leisure centre solar panels are nearly finished; he requested that the Town Council be involved in the official switch on.

Councillor Jones clarified that in regard to the de-fib maintenance, there are no issues; at present all Biddulph machines that are managed by Lifeline are serviced and up to date.

Councillor Salt questioned whether the De-fibs are registered with the British Heart Foundation. Councillor Jones stated that, as far as he is aware, it is not requirement; the Ambulance Service give people access in emergencies. Councillor Jones stated that all the de-fibs are registered on a piece of software called the Circuit, which is a national database. The only way to receive the code to use a de-fib is to contact the West Midlands Ambulance Service. Councillor Garvey gave his thanks to the members of the Biddulph Lifeline for their continued work on this.

Councillor Rogers reported that during the Staffordshire Parish Council Association meeting there was a large discussion regarding the National speed limits being reduced from 60 to 40 on certain roads.

The Mayor reported that the Moorlands Partnership Board will meet this week.

The Chief Officer reported that in relation to Fairtrade, all Councillors are required to vote on the banners displayed in the reception area; these have been created by local schools.

101. ITEM REQUESTED BY COUNCILLOR SALT:

Biddulph Town Council is committed to encouraging grass roots football in our town, noting the huge recent growth & the fact we have over 60 grassroots teams. It acknowledges the issues faced with facilities locally and will do all it can to lobby partners & signpost clubs to funding opportunities with the aim of ensuring this growth can be sustained for the benefit of the health & wellbeing of our local community.

Briefing paper attached.

Councillor Salt stated that a meeting has been scheduled for Friday 15th March at 10am for the Biddulph Football Group.

Councillor Salt reported that football had 'exploded' in the town over the last 4 to 5 years, particularly in the female teams since the World Cup; she referred to the document provided by Simon Robinson after working with the local teams, which highlighted the issues on the pitches in Biddulph.

Councillor Salt stated that there are significant issues with both School and Council run pitches; local organisations do not have the funds to fix these pitches or invest, therefore Biddulph teams are having to travel to Congleton and Leek.

Councillor Salt requested the above motion be agreed by Councillors.

Councillor Jackson questioned whether the District Council are willing to help, and stated that 4G pitches are required.

Councillor Fluder left the meeting at 7.30pm.

Councillor Smith acknowledged the work of volunteers required for football teams; it is not just football it is a community.

Councillor Jones questioned whether there is any synergy between a five-a-side pitch and football pitch. He suggested an amendment and would like to support 'All sport' in relation to the above motion; he doesn't want to restrict this to just football.

There was discussion around the wording of the motion, Councillor Salt agreed to amend the motion to include rugby: *...Grassroots football and rugby.* within the first line of the above statement.

Councillor Salt proposed that Councillors be named when voting; seconded by Councillor Jackson.

Councillor Jones proposed that '*All sports*' be added to the motion; seconded by Councillor Rogers.

Voted in favour: Councillors Rogers, Holdsworth, Eardley, Jones and Lawton (5 votes for)

Voted against: Councillors Salt, Hopkins, Parkes, Brady, Smith, Jackson and Yates. (7 votes against)

Abstentions: Councillors Redfern, Garvey, Hawley, Fletcher and Kisicki.

Councillor Salt proposed the statement recited, with the amendment of '*Grassroots football and rugby*'; seconded by Councillor Jackson.

12 voted for and there were 5 abstentions. **Motion carried.**

102. ITEM REQUESTED BY COUNCILLOR HAWLEY:

Town Council meetings have been increasing in length. We need to bring Council meetings in line with Standing Orders to reduce meeting times, especially in relation to 10 and 1p, 3f and 3g.

Councillor Hawley addressed the Council as the Monitoring Officer. He expressed concern regarding the length of recent Council meetings.

Councillor Hawley proposed to refer to the Finance and Management Committee for discussion; seconded by Councillor Harper. All **agreed.**

103. TO NOTE THAT THE CHIEF OFFICER IS THE CHAIR OF THE STAFFORDSHIRE BRANCH OF THE SOCIETY OF LOCAL COUNCIL CLERKS

It was noted.

104. TO NOTE THAT THE TOWN COUNCIL HAS BEEN SHORTLISTED IN THE ‘LETS CELEBRATE TOWNS’ PROGRAMME IN THE INFRASTRUCTURE CATEGORY

Councillor Salt offered congratulations and proposed that the Chief Officer travel to London to the event and use it as an opportunity for networking and sharing of best practice; seconded by Councillor Garvey. All **agreed**.

105. ACCOUNTS & FINANCE

a) To **approve** accounts to be paid in March 2024:

b) Expenditure over £500			
Prism	Software support	INV 189667	936.86
D&G Buses	93 Bus Service	February	3507.00
SMDC	TH Business Rates DD	MARCH	2800.00
Octopus Energy	Town Hall - Electricity		1406.54
Octopus Energy	Visitor Centre - Electricity		703.45
Moorland Contract Cleaning Ltd	Visitor Centre Cleaning	FEB	981.13
Moorland Contract Cleaning Ltd	Wharf Road Cleaning	FEB	1524.85
Prism	Software support	INV 193176	958.22
Sandyford Properties Investments Ltd	Storage Unit – rent	March 2024	624.00
Opus Energy	Gas Town Hall DD	INV 28561875	3536.51
Scribe (Starboard Systems Limited)	Accounts Package – Annual		2164.32
Complete Weed Control	Japanese Knotweed – Butterfly Garden (1 st year treatment, survey and report)		1050.00
The Speakers Agency	Booking – Speaker – Rachel de Thame 11.05.24 (to note: will be part reimbursed via tickets sales for the event)	(Includes VAT of £1000, to note £4000 to be reimbursed via UK Shared Prosperity Fund)	6000.00

Wain Marsh Tree Services	Tree Works – Town Burial Ground		500.00
Opus Energy	Gas Town Hall DD	INV 28661132	3058.13
No5 Barristers Chambers	Professional fees of Nicola Preston – Biddulph In Bloom Legal Advice		2400.00

Expenditure less than £500			
Fifteen Group	Telephones DD	INV 119761	132.74
NatWest	Bank Charges –DD		0.45
SMDC	Storage Unit- Business Rates DD	Due for remainder of the year 2023-2024 (until 31/3/2024)	270.56
Culligan	Water Cooler Rental + 6 bottles		74.17
Sandyford Properties Investments Ltd	Storage Unit – Service Charge	March 2024	24.00
Waterplus	Water Supply – Visitor Centre	Feb 2024	23.16
Waterplus	Water Supply – TH	Dec – Feb 2024	448.98
Prism	Phone Charges		257.39
Myers & Co Solicitors	Employer Assist Membership		150.00
Electrical Installation Supplies	Light bulbs		22.82
Reliance High Tech	Lone working devices	Feb	73.14
Octopus Energy	Wharf Road – Electricity		141.33
1 st Bradley Green Methodist Brownies	Town Cllr Grant 23/24 – via Cllr Fletcher	Uniforms/activity days	250.00
Toni's Treats	SCC Meeting Refreshments	INV 37	100.00
Toni's Treats	BWT (BLPG 20/2 & Feast and Flicks 21/2)	INV 38	80.00
Jodie Hancock	Reimbursement	Meeting Refreshments	10.60
Toni's Treats	Feast & Flicks Refreshments 14/2/24	INV 36	40.00
Toni's Treats	Feast & Flicks 6/3 & BLPG 5/3 - Refreshments	INV 40	100.00
Toni's Treats	Feast & Flicks 28/2 & BLPG 27/2 - Refreshments	INV 41	80.00
Tidysite Skip Services	Bin Emptying – wc 19/02/24	INV 136611	171.87
Tidysite Skip Services	Bin Emptying – wc 26/02/24	INV 136970	199.19
Moorland Contract Janitorial Ltd	Cleaning Supplies	INV 2992	100.15

Moorland Contract Janitorial Ltd	Cleaning Supplies	INV 2991	100.15
Tidysite Skip Services	Bin Emptying – wc 12/02/24	INV 136325	229.68
Waterplus	Water Supply – Visitor Centre	Jan 2024	20.14
Waterplus	Water Supply – Burial Ground		24.06
Euro Digital Services	Printing – 28Jan – 27Feb		166.41
The National Allotment Association	Annual Membership		67.00
Waterplus	Water Supply – Burial ground	12 Jan – 12 Feb	46.72
Elizabeth Norton	Eye Test & Glasses		75.00

Credit Card			
Giff Gaff	Mobile Phones	March	8.00
Giff Gaff	Mobile Phones	March	8.00
Giff Gaff	Mobile Phones	March	8.00
Facebook	Advertising – Social Media		49.91
Amazon	Feast & Flicks – DVDs		25.42
Amazon	Feast & Flicks – DVD		6.39
Amazon	Stationery		4.80
Amazon	First Aid Supplies – Bandages		13.62
Amazon	Heating Insulation Panels – Energy Saving Day		116.55
Amazon	Key tags		4.99
Amazon	First Aid Supplies, Stationery, Wireless Mouse		20.26
Site King	Caretaker Work Trousers		35.31
Amazon	First Aid Supplies – Tubular Bandages		3.47
Amazon	First Aid Supplies – Surgical Tape		5.99
Amazon	Energy Saving Day – Thermo Mugs		38.00
Amazon	Energy Saving Day – Fleece Blankets		20.97
Amazon	Stationery – Tape Dispensers		6.45
Amazon	Energy Saving Day – Fleece Blankets		15.28
Facebook	Social Media Advertising		4.11
Vital Skills by HSQE	Staff Training		192.00
Amazon	Magnetic Frames		25.18
Amazon	Wooden Stakes/Signs		33.99

Amazon	Engraved Door Signs		38.00
Canva	Annual Subscription		99.99
Keep it Personal LTD	Town Council Service – Recognition Gift		50.67
Newton Flag and Banner Makers Ltd	The D-Day 80 Flag of Peace		34.80
Sainsburys	Emergency Food – resident		46.05
Sainsburys	Feast & Flicks 21.02.24	Refreshments	26.55
Sainsburys	Feast & Flicks 27.02.24	Refreshments	17.20
B&M	Feast & Flicks 27.02.24 (£35.99) & Meeting refreshments (£4.90)		40.89
Furniture@Work	Guest Locker		186.00
B&M	Kitchen & Toilet Supplies		16.91
Sainsburys	BWT- Feast & Flicks 06.03.24	Refreshments	28.95

c) To approve supplementary accounts (to be tabled)

Expenditure over £500			
Salaries	March		15124.06
HMRC	PAYE		3791.97
Staff Pensions	Pensions	March	5831.84
Opus Energy	Town Hall – GAS	(DD) 03 Jan – 04 Feb 24	3801.36
Moorland Contract Janitorial Ltd	Visitor Centre Cleaning	INV -10403	981.13
Moorland Contract Janitorial Ltd	Wharf Road Cleaning	INV -10402	1524.85
R.G.S Lengthsman	Remove Christmas Trees and displays, Gritting, Repair of Welcome Sign, Removal and disposal of Spoil at WBG	01/01/24 – 08/03/24	1245.00
R.G.S Lengthsman	First Grasscutting Payment 2024		9950.00
Hanley Print Services Ltd	Booklets	Over 50s - Booklets (Club Societies, Slow Cooker recipes)	757.00

Expenditure less than £500			
CASH	Volunteer Expenses March (£200.00), Petty Cash (£16.93)		216.93
Fifteen Group	Telephones DD	INV 120187	132.74
Standard Life	Voluntary Pension Payment	March	150.00
Wayne Rogers	Travel Expenses	SMDC Assembly & SPCA meeting	36.00
K.Wood	Window Cleaning TH	March INV KW111	114.00
Eon Next	Xmas Lights Supply	1 st Feb – 29 th Feb	9.31
Tidysite Skip Services	Bin Emptying	INV – 137272	171.87
SMDC	H&S Visit David Owen	INV 0030148600	233.16
Tidysite Skip Services	Bin Emptying	INV 137541	226.51
Unity Trust	Bank Charges		2.94
NatWest	Bank Charges		66.89

Credit Card			
Sainsburys	Feast & Flicks 13.02.24	Refreshments	1.20
Sainsburys	Feast & Flicks 13.03.24 £21.05 / Meeting £4.30	Refreshments	25.35
Lamp Light Of Peace	D-Day Anniversary Lamp		55.00
4Imprint.uk	Travel Mugs	Energy Saving promoting items	362.69

It was Proposed to move on-block by Councillor Brady; seconded by Councillor Harper. All agreed.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

In accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, s1, the Council is to determine which items, if any, should be taken with the public excluded.

106. TO CONFIRM THAT THE CUSTOMER SUPPORT APPRENTICE SHOULD PROGRESS TO COMPLETE A LEVEL 3 QUALIFICATION- CUSTOMER SERVICE SPECIALIST

All agreed.

107. TO RECEIVE THE BARRISTER'S ADVICE IN RELATION TO BIDDULPH IN BLOOM AND TO CONSIDER NEXT STEPS (ATTACHED)

It was agreed that the Chief Officer write a letter to confirm the decision.

The meeting ended at 8.00pm

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